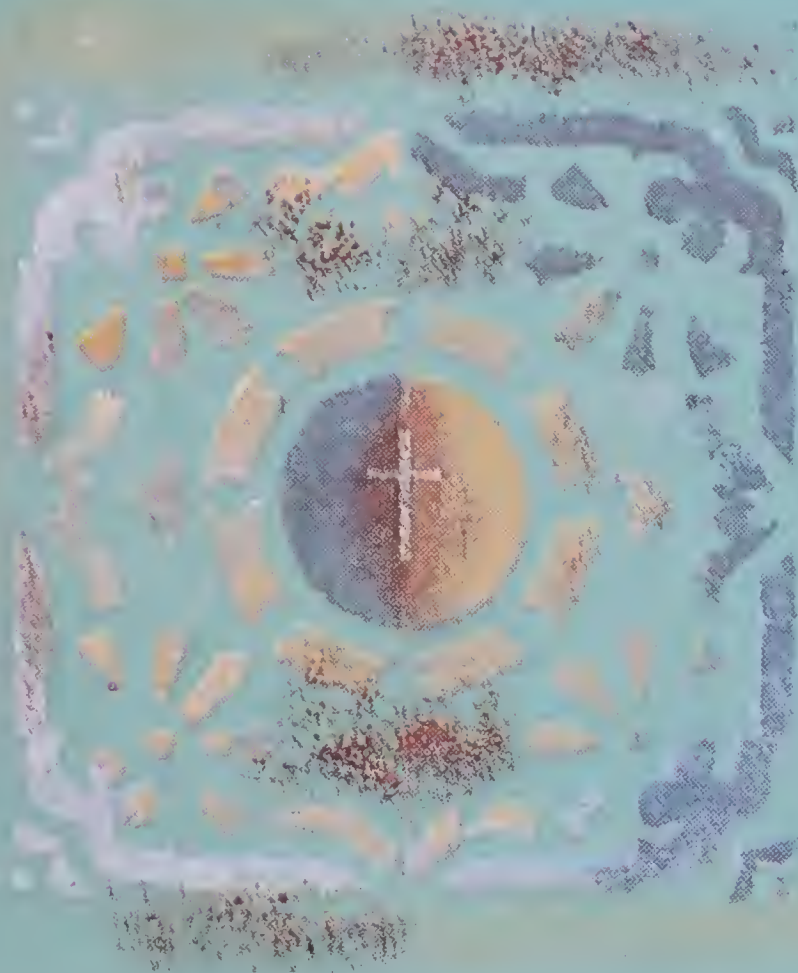


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AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Rev. Fr. MATHEW VAIDYAN



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AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

(English)

AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Essays

by **Rev. Fr. K. L. Mathew Vaidyan**

Karippottu Kizhakkedathu

Thazhakara P. O., Mavelikara-690102

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Preface

There are many misconceptions about the word theology. Experiencing God and the study of theology are different. Anybody can make discourses about God. We have to get into the horizon of worship, incessant prayer, growth in goodness and spiritual observances. Theology is not God-talk. Theology is the process of exploring the halo in man by constant growth in sanctity, worship and good deeds. The disunity in textual level should be replaced by the unity in cultic level. In the cultic context of theology words become deeds and knowledge becomes transfiguration. A sound methodology of theology is the need of our time. With the assistance of patristic insights, The Eastern Christian Tradition of theological articulations are discussed in this book.

I do hereby acknowledge my indebtedness to my teachers, students and audiences. I am grateful to Dr. Samuel Chandanappally and to Prof. Jose Parakadavil for their sincere words of appreciation. For the publication of this work, I am greatly indebted to Rev. Fr. Abraham Ipe Mangat Cor-Episcopa and to the beloved sponsors in Kuwait for their timely support and assistance. Upto a great extend I have utilized the pattern of translation of my book 'Thinking about God' and in this respect I acknowledge my gratitude to Prof. E. Jacob John, Catholicate College, Pathanamthitta who translated the same. May I express my thanks also to the owners of Chris Printers for their neat performance.

Mavelikara
15-2-1994

Fr. K. L. Mathew Vaidyan

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The Proponent of Comfort Literature and the Theologian of Reconciliation

Dr. Samuel Chandanappally

The collection and distribution of ideas form an integral part of the universal goals of education. The 'feudal lordships' who are very particular not to impart the acquired knowledge are not venerated by the modern generation. Knowledge increases as it is shared. Therefore, it is one of the primary lessons of natural etiquette to return the acquired knowledge back to the society. Whatever man has taken from the church or the society he is committed to give it back in multiples. With such individuals, God is pleased. The society eagerly awaits for their birth.

When I went through the manuscripts of the seventeen books written by Rev. Fr. Mathew Vaidyan, my thought turned this way. He is a young priest experiencing the bliss of the soul by sharing the novel ideas acquired through incessant learning and literary askesis. He didn't lose the temper and goodness of his mother-tongue even if he had to undergo theological higher studies in foreign universities. The stream of Fr. Vaidyan's thinking is crystalclear and well-thought. This curious young priest is not in the habit of swallowing the ideas of other language. It is his in born nature to arrive at his own inferences evaluating from the contradicting poles of reasoning and faith. Reading the series of books written by Fr. Mathew Vaidyan never ends in loss of time. On the other hand it elevates the chaotic. Pilgrim lives to the shore of optimism and life after life. The aim of a good writer is nothing other than this.

The thought systems and visions of Fr. Mathew Vaidyan deserve deep study. If we re-gather the main contents of one

book, it becomes another book. Here I wish to point out only the core and pulse of them.

Putting it in a single verse, Fr Mathew Vaidyan is the proponent of Comfort Literature and the theologian of Reconciliation. The so-called Comfort Literature gives relief, courage and hope to human souls. The Theology of Reconciliation reconciles materialism and spirituality, heaven and earth and even the creation at large. This scholarly genius handles both of them at the same time. The sincere and experiential words of the writer comforts the reader, convict him about the vain glories of the world and inspire him to fly upto spiritual realms inheriting eternal bliss. The author has a mature theological methodology. Most of his writings are based on the philosophical, intellectual and devotional traditions of the Eastern Church Fathers. He hasn't forgot to interpret the valuable wisdom of great people relevant to the contemporary generation. He is convinced about the linguistic limitations in analysing Eternal Truth. God is incomprehensible. The reality is beyond conception, perception, explanation, and articulation. The enquiry of human-being based on his reason, intellect and philosophies can never satisfy the quest for reality. The spiritual experience of an individual has four-fold realm, namely, faith, transfiguration, peace and witness. Man has to recognize the limitations of reason, turn to the revelations of God and grow in accordance with the revelations through his faith. This world manifests the glory of the Creator. The author of this book exclaims, Oh, marvellous creation, if man could see you as the temple of God !

Those who try to grasp the mysteries of reality and interpret the meaning of the universe on the basis of atheistic assumptions became desperate. Such a prophetic warning is given by the author of this series of books. He observes the Kirillian photography, the Ozone layer surrounding the earth, the Chloro-Flouro-Carbons which cause dangerous holes in the Ozone layer and other phenomenons of the earth with keen interest. Each and every chapter of these books assert the need for a spiritual code of conduct to humanity. The author

appeals to work for a new society, co-ordinating the head, heart and hands of human beings. Holiness, divine wisdom and manual labour are the marks of the members of an ideal society.

The dynamic human presence on the earth and the heavens is portrayed by Fr. Mathew Vaidyan. Man is called to be a blessing for the whole creation. The divine calling has an intention. Man should stand in between God and world, participating in both, transfiguring the world for the glorification of God. The presence of man should sanctify this universe. Human beings have a mediatory function. Science can change this world, technology can change this world, but the real and deep change is made through prayer. It is for the glory of God, man lives and works. The message of the author to the modern generation continues: man should grow continuously and infinitely, in holiness, goodness, worship and ethics. Have faith in good values, transfer the good values and suffer for the good values. Thus life becomes meaningful.

Exhortations of conscientization for a responsible society can be seen in the pages of these books. The subject of spirituality and social commitment is dealt with in detail. The first lesson of education is to acknowledge the limitations of knowledge. If the intellect is not saturated by devotion, it is not the right type of intellect.

The 'isms' which pin together only the head and hands will have to surrender-the author holds on to this view re-calling his experiences in Russia. Knowledge of the natural laws must be saturated by admitting the imperfections of such knowledge. Man's consumption of resources must be controlled. Pleasures of one's life should not kill his soul. Worship without sacrifice is irrelevant. Individuals with arrogance can never flame up the image of God in them. All kinds of selfishness, exploitation, avarice and mis-use of knowledge are the cause of destruction.

What we need today is Simple Christianity without any kind of boasting. The Holy Fools in the Russian Church History have great relevance today. The author is very much inspired

by Philocalia, the documentary collections about Orthodox Spirituality.

The definition given by Fr. Mathew Vaidyan to Theology is worth listening: 'There is a halo on the face of each person. Theology is the process of exploring the origin of this halo.' This process is not mere exercise of lips or textual analysis. Theology should reach the experiential level from both the emotional and intellectual levels. Words, silence, contemplation and rituals are all helpful to this process. The walls which separate the Hindu, the Muslim, the Sikh and the Christian are to be broken in this experiential level. The search for the common source of this halo leads us to the unity of reconciliation. To this unity of reconciliation the society is invited by the author. The disunity in textual level should be replaced by the unity in cultic level.

A mature human being is one who stick on to the creeds and ideologies giving strength, hope and peace and at the same time respect other creeds and ideologies which impart strength, hope and peace to others. The Theology of Reconciliation is the spirituality of maturity. The emphasis given to different sources of the Bible are to be considered by Christians with equal importance. The general message of religious books are to be taken collectively. Often 'Canon within the Canon' becomes dangerous. The Theology of Reconciliation is the remedy for fanaticism. All kinds of fanaticism are to be thrown out. This Theologian of Reconciliation criticizes the tendencies of some social reformists to neglect worship and of some other religious people to neglect social transformation. We must not hesitate to transform the church and society accepting dynamic insights. Advocating a classless social order, Fr. Mathew Vaidyan is building a bridge between the present and the future affirming the eschatological realm of the perfection of creation. Simple charity of today should lead to perfect charity of tomorrow, says the author. Integration of self-less love is the basis of a well-built society.

In the early church, the room attached with the holy altar was called Diakonikon and this was the centre for charity works.

The author pictures this centre as the text book of the Theology of Reconciliation. And what is the manifesto of this theology? The daily routine of the Basilian monastic order which compiled eight hours' prayer, eight hours' sleep and rest, eight hours' work is pictured as the manifesto for the Theology of Reconciliation. The reconciled society is that which is based on justice, love and glorification of the Creator. The real wealth of the church is the holiness of its members. The one beyond time and space took matter in the salvific and redemptive plan of God. This is the service of reconciliation. The mediums, signs symbols and words are the factors of reconciliation. God is unknown in ousia but known in the energeia. The mysteries of God will be revealed only to 'the initiated'. Man's union with Christ is undefinable and mystical. The Incarnation of Christ is the service of reconciliation. The sanctification of the world through the Church is the service of reconciliation. The part of the sacramental mysteries of the church is also the service of reconciliation. In the church's life of worship the synagogue worship and the temple worship of the Jews were co-ordinated. This is the Theology of Reconciliation. The communion of the visible church, and the invisible church is an experience of reconciliation.

How ecumenism becomes the service of reconciliation? Ecumenism in space should be replaced by ecumenism in time. Real ecumenism is the unity of time beyond this visible world. Here the walls of all man-made organizations are broken. Here unity is restored with the faith and practices of the former generation. The icon used by the Orthodox Churches as the medium of worship is itself the Theology of Reconciliation, says Fr. Mathew Vaidyan. Icons are the 'theology in colour'. Icon is the centre of reconciliation between the heaven and the earth. Icons are made through years of meditation and contemplation. They act as the window for vision of the Kingdom of God. The cross and the altar represent the Theology of Reconciliation. The cross is the sign of victory over self, circumstance and death. The presence of the cross itself is the incessant gospel message to the world. The tri-colour combination of the altar represent the Theology of Reconciliation. The red-colour coverage on the altar symbolizes

the sky and the solar system of the universe. The greenish coverage represents the earth and its biosphere. The white coverage denotes the church cleaned from the gibberish of sin through the salvific blood of the Lamb of God. All these factors assembled in the altar denote the harmony of the creation in Christ. The Holy Eucharistic Bread submitted as the fruit of man's labour is the Theology of Reconciliation. The perfection of the harmony is in the Holy Eucharist in which life is surrendered, transfigured and shared.

In brief, the theological system of Fr. Mathew Vaidyan constitute explanations and interpretations based on ecclesiological framework of the Eastern Christian Tradition. Fr. Mathew Vaidyan has a bright record of excellent service as the Professor of Orthodox Theological Seminary Kottayam, Principal of St. Paul's Mission Training Centre Mavelikara, Chief Editor of three publications namely Orthodox Youth, Doothan and Pawrasthya Tharam, General Secretary of Orthodox Christian Youth Movement and General Secretary of the Orthodox Church Clergy Association. He has gained much repute within a short period. He is an efficient organizer, orator, writer and a scholar admired by many people. The seventeen books written by Fr. Mathew Vaidyan can be rightly called a valuable treasure for Malayalam literature and Malankara Church. His life and study in Russia for a period of two years and his wide experiences in many other foreign countries helped him to complete this magnifiscent job. I wish wide receptibility to these valuable writings which convey information and enjoyment to the lovers of wisdom both Christian and non-Christian.

The writings of Fr. Mathew Vaidyan are the gold, myrrh and frankincense reconciling the earth and the heaven. I submit this series of books to the contemplative minds. Let the fragrance of these books renew the church and the society.

[Dr. Samuel Chandanappally is the honorary director of Ceedees Oriental Research Institute for Human Resources Development with its headquarters at Chandanappally.]

The Genius of Positive Thinking

Prof. Jose Parakadavil

A talented orator conquering the audience, a writer who interprets deep spiritual principles suited to the common mass, a theologian who guides the pilgrims who search the depth and width of divine knowledge—Rev. Fr. Mathew Vaidyan is reputed in these manifold ways. It is a joyful task to introduce this multi-faced genius to the readers.

□ You have fulfilled a number of official duties in the Malankara Church. Will you please elucidate the main ones?

I worked as Professor of Theology in the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam. At present, I am working as the Principal of St. Paul's Mission Training Centre Mavelikara with the special initiative taken by Dr. Geevarghese, Mar Osthathios Metropolitan. I am the chief editor of three Church magazines namely, Orthodox Youth, Doothan and Pawrasthya Tharam. I was the first publisher of 'Purohithan' the official organ of the Orthodox Clergy Association. It was with the special interest of Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan, that I worked as the first General Secretary of the clergy association of the Orthodox Church. Later, Fr. M. A. Mathai (Dr. Mathews Mar Severius Metropolitan) was appointed in this post. I worked as the general secretary of the Orthodox Christian Youth Movement for a few years when Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios Metropolitan was its president. At that time, Fr. George Kurien (Geevarghese Mar Coorilose Metropolitan) was the general secretary of the Student Movement of the Church. Our joint efforts was a boon to the youth. We tried to bring a spiritual awakening among the young generation. It was in this period that the leaders of syndesmos, the world Orthodox Youth Organization, paid their first visit to India. I was invited as a guest speaker to the world General Assembly of syndesmos which took place at the Valamo

monastery near Helsinki in 1980. I continue my service as a member of the Church Managing Committee, Planning Committee and Publication Committee

☐ You have extended your service to other areas outside the church. A brief description?

In addition to my official duties in the church, I use to engage in social activities. All Kerala Balajana Sakhyam helped me to nourish the interest in social activities from my childhood days. I was a Union President and Central Committee member of the Sakhyam. I got the opportunity to work as the Patron of Sakhyam Mavelikara Union with Prof. Kozhuvalloor M.K. Cherian. With active enthusiasm I give leadership to sick aid ministry, development projects and house-building assistance programmes for the poor.

☐ Naturally it seems that you have served as parish vicar in the same period?

Surely. I worked as vicar in the following parishes: Mavelikara Kallumala St. Gregorios, Kottarcavu St. George, Vazhuvady Mar Baselios, Kallimel St. Thomas, Puthiakavu St. Mary's Cathedral, Kunnam St. George, Aranoottimangalam St. Kuriakose and also in the parishes of Lucknow, Allahabad and Rae Bareilli in outside Kerala.

☐ You have made a number of foreign trips?

As the representative of the Orthodox Church I participated in a number of conferences. As a convention speaker I visited many countries. I visited the Gulf countries four times delivering series of sermons in the following centres: Kuwait, Ahmadi, Muscat, Dubai, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, Ras-al-Khaimah, Um-al-Quain, Dibba, Fujairah, Khorfakan, Doha, Dukan, Bahrain. Also I could visit countries like Russia, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Armenia, Georgia, Ukrain and Poland.

☐ What is your opinion about the fruitfulness of Convention Speeches?

I Consider it fruitful. Still I work in this field because it gives me satisfaction.

☐ A prophetic zeal and vitality is seen in your sermons. What are the topics you like most?

In addition to biblical subjects I deal with the problems of environment, the phenomenons of nature, Kirillian photography, the halo in individuals, the immorality of mankind and other related subjects. I use to criticize crucially men's pride, vain glory, avarice and sensual pleasures ignoring the message of simplicity and moral values. The central theme of my message is the need for a spiritual code of conduct. Crisis is the path to progress. In the midst of crisis of and tribulations we have to keep our sanctity keep the commandments in the Word of God and grow in good deeds. I am very particular to remind the dangers of loose morality and life without self-control.

☐ Please give a brief description of your writings.

'The Holy Fools' include the history and characteristics of the saintly heroes in the Russian Church known by this name. The books in the Divya Bodhanam Series 'Vedasathra Veedhiyil' and 'Thinking about God' are notes prepared for seminary students in theological subjects. 'Theology and Mission' discusses both mission and theology in the Indian philosophical context. The reflections of theological ideas in the veneration of icons are contained in the book 'The icon and its Theology'.

'God, Man, Community' is the analysis of social teachings relevant in the Indian, context. 'Sathyathinte Thoonukal' is a brief biographical sketch and messages of the early Church Fathers. 'Prakasavalayam' is the collection of my selected sermons. Articles on spirituality and social commitment mostly from the editorials in 'Orthodox Youth' are included in 'Adhyatmikathayum Samuhyaprathibadthathayum.' Contributions of a few giants in the field of Russian literature are analysed in 'Russian Sahithyathile Pavizhamuthukal'. My own experiences in the Russia of Breshnev's period are discussed in the book 'Russiayil Randu Varsham.' 'Viswasa Paadangal is the study of the faith, practices and traditions of the Orthodox Church. 'Nirappinte Daivasasthrom' is an anthology of theologically important subjects. Old Testament insights together with Bible quiz are

included in 'Vedavijnanamamanjari.' Illustrations, incidents, experiences and stories full of moral insights and positive thinking are the contents of the book 'Subhachinthakal.' It can be said that it belongs to the branch of 'Comfort Literature.'

☐ By 'Comfort Literature' what do you mean actually?

Frustrated souls are comforted by morally strong positive thinking. It helps to make life creative and full of contentment and hope amidst encircling gloom, tensions and tribulations. This is the literature with a good purpose. Man is equipped with vigour and vitality to believe in good values, transfer the good values to future generations and to sacrifice his life for those moral values.

☐ What is your attitude towards art and literature?

Today we can see three types of art and literature—art for sensual pleasures, art for art's sake and art for enmity and annihilation. The so-called 'painkili' literature (erotic blue-film type descriptions not highly applauded today) belongs to the first type. New definitions and experiments in the artistic field belong to the second type. Ideals and appeals for social revolutions, bloodshed and class-wars can be assessed as the third type. All these streams of thought co-ordinate only the intellect and manual labour avoiding the areas of worship and devotion. In my opinion art and literature must be useful for the comfort of human souls.

☐ Some Personal enquiries too. The origin of the name 'Vaidyan'?

The Vaidyan family is in Thevalakara, Kollam district. Here follows the history of the origin. In seventeenth century a man from the Brahmin family in Thevalakara by name 'Thazhamangalathu' received the Christian Faith. He is considered to be the founder of the Vaidyan Family. Through a monk from the royal family of Virad who settled down in Thevalakara in the first half of the eighteenth century, the members of this family became talented in medical treatment especially in the field of ophthalmology. One of our fore-fathers could cure the eyedisease of the mother of King Anizham Thirunal of Travancore. This

incident prompted the king to bestow upon the male members of the family the title 'Vaidyan.' Now the Vaidyan family members have settled down also in many other parts of the country.

☐ Something about your education and family background?

The late K. O. Lukose Vaidyan, Karipottu Kizhakkedathu, Thevalakara of the Vaidyan family is my father. Mother's name Aleyamma. I had my primary education at Kizhakke Thevalakara L.P.S and secondary education at Bethel U.P.S. From Kovoov High School, Thevalakara I passed S.S L.C examination with first class in 1967 and took B.Sc degree with Mathematics main from Devaswam Board College, Sasthamcotta in 1972. The next year I joined the Orthodox Theological Seminary and was ordained Deacon in 1976.

I took my B.D from Serampore University with high grade. Together with my class-mate at the seminary Fr. M. A. Mathai (now Dr. Mathews Mar Severios Metropolitan) I went to the Soviet Union for higher studies. I was a student at the Leningrad Theological Academy (now St. Petersburg) for two years. Mastering the Russian language, I submitted my thesis about iconography in the same language. I took Master of Theology and returned to India. After obtaining another Master degree in Theology from Serampore University, I was appointed as Lecturer at the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam. On 21st November 1981 I was ordained priest by His Grace Mathews Mar Coorilose Metropolitan (now His Holiness the Catholicos Bese-lius Mar Thoma Mathews II).

My wife Mercy, who teaches at the M. S. S High School, Thazhakara, is the daughter of M. K. Koshy and Rahelamma Teacher, Kulangara Mercy Cottage, Puthoor. Children: Luby Aley Mathew, Leena Raechel Mathew and Luke Mathew Vaidyan (Lishoi). Brothers and Sisters: K. L. Thomas Vaidyan (South Africa), Usha Thomas (Pune) K. L. Philip Vaidyan (Pune) and Shirley Dias (Kottayam). Adv. Mathews Koshy Kulangara and Thomas Koshy are my brothers-in-law.

☐ You have lived and studied in Russia for two years. What is your attitude towards the changes in Russia?

Social justice is to be achieved through the path of non-violence. That which last long is the right co-ordination of intellect, manual labour and devotion. Both atheism and inhumanity are to be condemned. But still I hold the view that freedom controlled is better than freedom mis-used.

□ What do you think about the future of the Church?

Self-examination and self-criticism are necessary. Waves of holiness should be imparted. A return to the altar is the need of the time. Spiritual observances are to be practised. The Church should be lead a crusade against immorality. Establishments and institutionalization must not result in loosing human souls. The Church has to work out more charitable projects. Sheep-stealing is to be prevented by regular work-shops to publish and distribute apologetic writings. The church should encourage art and literature, Our religious lives must become experiential rather than emotional and intellectual. Theology should be shifted from textual character to cultic character. I am sure, in this way Malankara Church can achieve a renewed vital life more fruitful to the individuals and to the society at large.

1. Philosophy And Theology

Philosophy and Theology are two inter-related disciplines sometimes greatly mis-used and sometimes mis-interpreted. The etimological meanings of the words are 'love of wisdom' and 'discourse about God' respectively. The pre-socratics or the Aonian philosophers were concerned about the 'arche' or principle of life. Thales of Miletus said water is the principle of life. Anaximander said it is the 'apeiron' or 'the boundless infinite'. Anaximenes said that air is the principle of life.

The Pythagoreans tried to express reality in terms of numbers. Heraclitus discerned an all-abiding, all-ruling logos which lies beyond this physical realm. Against this, Parminides Spoke about the physical world as 'the Reality'. The Epicureans whose dictum was to 'eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die'; provide another development in the field of Greek Philosophy. The stoics asserted moral values and the need for obeying the 'principle' of beings. The early Stoics (Zeno, Cleanthus, Chrysippus) and the latter Stoics (Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius) defined 'the soul of the cosmos' and it was named 'theos'. This 'anima mundi' concept later became an important milestone in the development of Christian Theology.

The Sophists marked the change from Pre-Socratics to the classical Greek Philosophers—Plato, Socrates and Aristotle. The Sophists were well-versed in rhetorics and logic. They proclaimed the necessary principles for an ideal city state and its moral regulations. Against the sophists, Socratese proclaimed a 'sophia' (wisdom) and a 'diamon' (conscience). Based on this wisdom Plato and Aristotle built up their systems.

According to Plato, beyond the particular lies the universal—the 'World of Ideas' or Cosmos Noetos. Every particular existent

has meaning only if it participates in this World of Ideas or the World of Forms. He defined human soul as a chariot with two dissimilar horses—passion and reason—pulling through different directions. Aristotle formulated the concept of a Prime Mover. To him, the particular is important and the Universal is formed in the togetherness and unity of the particular, from bottom to the upward stage. The Neo-Platonians (Plotinus, Porphyry, Cratylus and others) tried to get a synthesis between Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics. They were probably highly influenced by Indian Philosophical thinking, can be from Ammonius Saccas, considered to be an Indian Buddhist.

The Cappadocian Fathers of the fourth century (St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nazianzus and St. Gregory of Nyssa) were well-versed in Greek philosophy—the dialogues of Plato, the dialectics of Aristotle the *Enneads* of Plotinus, the writings of Porphyry and other Philosophers. There is clear evidence that the Cappadocian Fathers had with them almost all the writings of Plato—like *Timaeus*, *Phaedo*, *Protagoras* and *The Republic*. Also the Cappadocian Fathers were through with the teachings of the Gnostics like Valentinus, Basilides, Marcian and Cerinthus.

The 'apeiron' concept of Anaximander was taken by the Cappadocian Fathers and re-interpreted in the Christian background. The 'logos' concept of Heraclitus was a great issue in the early Church. The problem of Christianity verses Hellenism was a crucial one and many attempts were done to solve it. The concept of Logos was put into Christian faith to solve this problem. To the Greeks the logos had an intermediary position. God or the supreme force sends the logos to his creation. This was the hellenic stand. But St. John the Evangelist declared bravely that Logos is God. (Jn. 1:1). The apologists tried to assert that Christianity is not a new religion. Justin stated Logos is 'heteros theos' not in number, but in will (thelema). The Cappadocian Fathers took this logos concept as a key element in their thinking. The gnostic emphasis on two ultimate principles (good and evil) was rejected by the Cappadocian Fathers with the help of this logos concept—Jesus the Logos.

The Neo-Platonic thinking on hierarchy was another theological problem prevailed in early Christianity. In the distinction between 'ho on' (the self-existent Being) and 'ta panta' (that which merely exist) the Neo-Platonians put many grades and each grade was participating in the nearest one. Apollinaris introducing the divine 'nous' in between, The One and The Many, The Cappadocian Fathers pointed out the logical inconsistency in such a theory. If it is divine nous, the flesh of Christ was present earlier and the conception from St. Mary is rejected and hence it is against the scripture, against logic and against the faith of the Church. The Cappadocian Fathers also used the concepts and terminologies of the Heretics Arius, Aetius and Eunomius to refute their heretical teachings and to explain the faith of the Church.

We can see valuable insights in the Cappadocian thinking about subjects like how to use scripture how to evaluate Pagan philosophical concepts and how to integrate them. The *scopos* (intent) of the Scripture is important, they affirmed. The Church Fathers discerned and used the pagan terminologies Christianizing them. The heretics put the Christian Faith into the framework of pagan philosophical thoughts whereas the Cappadocian Fathers took the Christian Faith as primary and the pagan insights were put into the framework of Christianity. We can trace some more examples of this tendency.

The 'sympnoia' concept of the Stoics is a good example. The word means 'co-breathing'. The Cappadocian Fathers Christianized this idea as follows:

- i. by stating that there is no sympnoia in the created order because of its sinful nature.
- ii. by attributing the sympnoia to Christ and His Cross.
- iii. by making the concept eschatological.

Man was considered as a microcosmos by the pagan philosophers. The Cappadocian Fathers asked 'what about the gnats and lizards? Are they too microcosmos? The Fathers correctly emphasized that man is the Image of God'. Thus the Cappadocians used the pagan concepts in a Christian context

for the oikodome (edification) of the Christian Community. As we compound some medicines from wild animals, as the Israelites used golden ornaments from their Egyptian neighbours to adore their Tabernacle, we can use pagan insights and secular philosophies but with care.

2. Conceptualization of Theology

In his theological orations St. Gregory of Nazianzus answers many questions including the following. What is theology? Who is a theologian? How to philosophize God? What is a theological discourse? What kind must be the theological audience?

To him, theology is not intellectual or logical convictions. Theology is not God-talk. It must help us to experience God. A transition from the intellectual level to the experiential level is solicited. Silence, cerebrations and celebrations, feasting and fasting, worship, individual and corporate prayer all these aspects are involved in theology. From textual character, it should be elevated to the cultic character. A theologian should have certain qualities. The experience of Moses at Mount Sinai is an example. We have to climb up, into the darkness, and to the brightness and finally become transfigured. Theology is not the vision of the glory of God but the partaking in that glory and finally 'becoming the glory'. Purification and illumination (Katarsis and Photisma) are the main aspects of this experience. How to philosophize God? Not at all times, not to every audience, not without good preparation by purity of heart and cleanliness of senses.

A theological discourse is a eucharistic act. Words become act. We become lighted to lighten. St. Gregory Nazianzen distinguishes *einai* (to know) and *eideinai* (to become). To become is more important rather than to know. *Thaumasia* or

wonder is the beginning of knowledge. Limitation of logic and rhetoric is to be confessed. Man is the Image of God and is supposed to grow in the image. Knowledge should become union. This physical body is a monastery or a training ground. Participation in the glory of God is important than a mere vision. Man has arche (beginning) and telos (end) but God has no arche and telos. It is by joining with the archetype that we acquire real knowledge. The greatest gift of God is the capacity to conceive things (epinoia).

About the problem of conceptualization of theology, another Cappadocian Father St. Gregory of Nyssa gives the following explanation. Our conceptual knowledge is limited to the boundaries of this time-space universe. There is a diastema or gap beyond the conceptual boundary. Our language itself is diastematic. God is incomprehensible. Concerning the God-World relationship Nyssa proposes a one-way diastema. In the Creator, there is no diastema, that is, within the Trinity. To God everything is immediately present. Everything exists by the projection of God's wisdom, will and power. The 'isness' of God is not like 'the isness' of other existents. The ousia (substance) of God is absolutely incomprehensible whereas God's operations through His energia (works or manifestations) can be known.

Where is God, inside or outside? Analysing this question St. Gregory of Nyssa evaluates: if the answer is 'inside' then God is limited. If He is outside, then God plus world becomes greater than God. So we can see that God is both inside and outside. We cannot say what is God but we can say God is. In other words, God cannot be expressed but only addressed. Can Godhead be expressed in numbers? The Trinitarian concept is a matter of faith and there is no way to prove it logically or philosophically. It belongs to the mystery' of the Church.

The need for apophatic silence is emphasized by Church Fathers. New terminologies and concepts are allowed only for clarification. Every positive statement must be followed by a negative statement as corrective and to check error. Many negative terminologies are used in this connection to name a few—anarchon, agennetos, atreptos, aphthartos, akinetos etc.

What is the relationship between Reality and language? Our language is inadequate to express Reality. The relation between an object and the concept of that object in our minds is a matter of much debate. The collective understanding of the community in consonance with the transferred traditions (Paradosis) of the Church is very important to analyse doctrines and new insights and to check errors.

The theological method of the Church Fathers enables us to arrive at the following methodological principles. God is incomprehensible. God's ousia (essence or substance) is absolutely unknown, But His energeia or operations can be known. The faith of the Church is more important than individual expressions of faith. The oikodome or building up of the Community is important. The formulated doctrines must be useful for the building up of the community. Scripture alone is incomplete. The inadequacy of the written documents of faith is to be asserted. Reality cannot be expressed fully by human language and terminologies. The Tradition of the Church, oral and written can be taken as the 'right prejudice especially in this modern rationalistic age of prejudice against prejudice'. Praxis and theoria (practice and theory) must go together. Contemplation must be followed by right action. The concept of synergeia (co-operating with the will of God) is relevant in analysing the salvific action. The importance of apophatic silence is of great value in our theological methodology. It should be used as complimentary and as a corrective device. Signs, symbols and mediums are equally important in our theological method. Though human effort is important in the process of conceptualization, the aspects of grace of God and gift of God are to be equally stressed. We have to watch and pray for this gift of God—to conceive, to articulate and to meditate. Both acquired knowledge and revealed knowledge are incomplete, dim, dark and partial. Incessant growth in goodness is the pre-requisite in our theological conceptualizations. Theology has a cultic value. The context of theology must be the context of worship. Our growth in worship, knowledge and goodness can be better expressed as a shift from kenosis (self-emptying) to plerosis (fullness or perfection)

3. The Matrix of Theology

God is not an object of man's study. 'The Absolute' is beyond perception, conception, articulation or interpretation. Theology is not God-talk but realization of God. To know or study is not so much important. 'To be' is the crux of our enquiry. Experience of God is important than knowledge of God. Theology is growth in the life in God. God has neither beginning nor end and God cannot be confined to the limits of time and space.

The word theology derives from the Greek term 'theologia' 'Theo' means 'God' and 'logia' means 'word' or 'description'. 'Theology', thus etimologically means word about God or the science that describes God. We do not come across this word in the Holy Bible. But we come across expressions that carry similar meanings. 'Mysteries of God' (1 Corinthians 2:7), 'Sound words' (2 Tim. 1:13), 'Sound doctrines' (Titus 1:19) etc. are some of these phrases.

How can we bring God into the field of scientific study? Our senses have their limitations as regards perception. When we look at an object with the naked eye, the mind forms a concept of it. But the connection between the object and the concept formed in the mind is not obvious. Man is not capable of understanding or analysing properly the objects of nature he sees around him. His sense of perception is far from being complete or perfect. It naturally follows that any attempt on our part to learn about God will bring only partial success because our senses of perception are imperfect. Theology or the study of God, therefore, is imperfect and incomplete.

The fourth Gospel declares that 'no man has ever seen God,, (1 John 4:12). God revealing Himself to Moses said: 'I am who I am' (Exodus 3:14). When God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, Moses saw Him as a flame of fire. Later, the Lord

said to Moses 'While my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back but my face shall not be seen' (Exodus 33:22-23). Moses was afraid of looking at God, and he covered his face. Let the people adore God Almighty and not me—wished Moses, the man of God. The ascent of Moses to Mount Sinai is an example of man's attempt to know God. Through Moses' experience God reveals man's spiritual quest. Moses climbs the mount in darkness; yet the Glory of God becomes revealed to him to the extent that he can bear seeing, though he cannot see the face of God.

Holiness, worship and ethics form the matrix of theology. Holiness does not mean mere observance of certain principles of morality. The process of sanctification is the process of man's change towards the image and likeness of the Lord. This is achieved through prayer and worship. The saints who endeavoured to know God did so by reaching the heights of sanctity. The Fathers of the Church exhort us to transform ourselves through worship and become models of goodness through leading a life of moral principles. As we go on sanctifying ourselves through worship and the practice of moral principles, the glory of the Lord becomes manifest in us. Worship does not mean a mere assembly of people in prayer; it is the coming together of the living and the departed for the glorification of the Lord, the Creator. It is communion with God that helps us realise God and not the learning of theology. But the study of theology can lead us to this realisation, if properly trained.

What a fool is the man who learns about the universe, but cannot find in it the Lord who is all-pervasive and exists in everything! This is because everything comes from such a Lord and He is the real Truth. It is to Him that the others owe their existence, (St. Gregory of Nyssa)

Two things are needed to make real the presence of God: (1) Constant will to reach God; (2) devout and persistent prayer. The more we try to move towards Him, the deeper the mystery that surrounds Him is revealed. We must aim at

focusing our minds and thoughts on Him, addressing Him as Father, and having communion with Him.

We enter the depths of the mystery of God's wisdom, when we dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life 'to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple (Psalms 27:4). Nearness to the Lord that one can attain is in proportion to the degree of sanctity one manages to attain for oneself. Nearness to the Lord helps one become more sanctified. Thus one gets the right to share the glory of the Lord. David himself answers the question: 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord or who shall stand in his holy place? (Psalms 24:3), The answer is: 'He who has clean hands and a pure heart' (Psalms 24).

We must share the mystery of God with a pure heart and by devout worship. In the Old Testament we find men of clean hands and pure heart experiencing God's nearness. This presence of God spoken of in the Old Testament has been fully realised in Jesus Christ. Today the presence of God is there in its fullness in the Church, the Body of Christ. When we partake the sacramental mysteries of the Church, we receive spiritual nourishment for our spiritual growth. Christian life is thus a spiritual growth by sharing the mysteries of the Church.

Theology is not a head to head exercise. Real knowledge of God is not received from class-room instruction, It comes to one who shares the life of worship of the Church and makes a personal effort to reach God through constant prayer. 'Let me say it again: knowledge is of different kinds. Real knowledge consists in our seeing our Creator, recognising His miracles, keeping His commandments and having close communion with Him. We usually say that He is seen from His Seat of Mercy in the sense that He will reveal Himself to his devotees. It is said that the Lord knows His people. This means that He will keep spiritual contact with those who go about doing good in this world.' (St.Basil the great. 4th century.)

Our life ought to be a spiritual pilgrimage that leads us to the ultimate union with Him. The Holy Fathers teach us that the

real end of theology lies in the ultimate union with Him. We come to know Him by being one with Him.

One thinker has observed that theology is like a map which guides us in our exploration of the geography of our faith. Logic and reason are insufficient to define God or to lead us to Him. We may discuss terms and expressions that we prefer to use to designate God. But it is foolish to try to bring God down to the limits of words and expressions. Not by reason, but by faith we know God.

Spiritual growth is the process by which our souls attain purification and illumination. The path of purification and illumination lies through observances and rites of the Church. The Holy Eucharist instituted by our Lord is the central point of Christian rites. The eligibility to take part in this mystery is not every one's, but is limited to the initiated. The uninitiated are not privileged to share the mystery of the Holy Sacrament. The initiated get the privilege, being full of love for their fellow creatures and for the Creator. 'Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' To know light we should ourselves become lights. We must move from the intellectual level to the experiential. When the Psalmist says, 'Be still and know that I am God' (Psalms 46:10), he means that we should look for subjective experience.

Then, what is meant by the study of theology? We are called upon to behold the glory of God, to grow more sanctified, to be keen on doing good and to share the inexplicable mysteries of divine communion.

4. The Mystery of the Holy Trinity

We learn from Eusebius, the Church historian, that the Church conferred the title of 'Theologian' on St. John the Evangelist and on St. Gregory of Nazianzus. St. John proclaimed

the 'Theosness' of Logos' and St. Gregory advocated the faith in the Holy Trinity. It was under certain special circumstances that they proclaimed that Logos is God. On the one hand, while the Greek thinkers accepted Logos only as a representative force proceeding from God, on the other, the Arian heretics denied the 'Theosness' of Jesus Christ, the second person in the Trinity. These incorrect views urged the early Fathers of the Church to a proper study of the true relationship of the persons of the Holy Trinity. Thus they were led to develop theology as a branch of learning that defines the true nature of the Trinity.

The word theology was widely used by the Classical Greek thinkers to describe their Gods. Great poets like Homer and Hesiod have often used this term while describing the gods and their deeds. In 'The Republic', Plato uses 'theology' to refer to the Supreme Reality or the Ultimate Ground of all things ('The Republic' 379 A.)

Aristotle uses the term, 'theology', to mean the branch of philosophy that connects the universe to the Ultimate Reality that is the Unmoved Mover ('Metaphysics' 102). He speaks of the three fields of knowledge, namely Physics, Mathematics and Theology. In his opinion, theology is the most important of the three branches.

The Stoics of the pre-Christian times divided theology into three branches: mystical, natural and civil, and described theology as the science explaining the knowledge obtained by spiritual exercises.

St. Clement of Alexandria and Origen are two of the early Christian writers who have attempted a definition of 'theology'. According to them, theology deals with the Incarnation of our Lord. Origen in his book interpreting the Gospel according to St. John asserts that the true theologian is the one who witnesses the Lord. Later in the 4th century A.D. with the rise of the Arian heresy the term 'theology' is seen to have been used in the Church to refer to the relationship of the persons in the Holy Trinity. The Church at that time is seen to have taught that

the real theologian is the one who proclaims and believes that the Logos that became flesh is the real God.

The Fathers of the Church tried to make a clear distinction between 'economy' or the deeds of the Incarnate and 'theology' or the eternal relationship of the persons constituting the Holy Trinity. The supporters of Arius laid great stress on the verse, 'My Father is greater than I' (St. John 14:28). They argued that the Father and the Son were not equals. Their argument that since the Son is lesser than the Father, he is not God, was simplistic. The Fathers of the Church, however, pointed out that it was as the Son in flesh and blood that Jesus Christ had made this pronouncement and that the Father was greater as long as the Son was living among men as a full man. They further taught that the Incarnation was a reflection of God's compassion, acts of redemption and self-emptying.

The Incarnation reveals the chosen way of God to discipline the creation. The created comes to know the Creator through Christ; worship Him and experiences Him. A Christian life based on this belief enables us to have divine revelations about the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

St. Paul explains: 'For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him; according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:9-12). In short, through the incarnation of our Lord, the mystery of the will of God was revealed. It is on this basis that theology is defined as a branch of learning that describes the mysteries of God as revealed through history and illuminated by faith. Some define theology as 'faith seeking understanding'.

God reveals His mysteries which are distinct from worldly knowledge. 'But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God which God decreed before the ages for our glorification....God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches

everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (1. Cor. 2:7-12). The Spirit of God reveals the hidden mysteries inherent in the Holy Trinity to those who love Him. This is the basis of Christian theology.

5. The Sources of Theology

The early Church was forced to impart theological knowledge in order to preserve faith. People from different strata of society received baptism and joined the Church. The Catechumens had to be taught the meaning and the glory of the Christian faith. For this, regular exhortations became necessary. Separate schemes for faith orientation before baptism came into existence. Written doctrines were given new interpretations. The Bible had not come into existence in the form of book. The doctrines which the believers had to learn took shape as the traditions of the Church and were handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, in the form of hand-written materials, and through observances.

The doctrines of the Church were questioned by the Jews, the Greeks and the rulers of the state. So, it became necessary to prove that the Christian doctrines could excel non-Christian doctrines. It was an urgent necessity to formulate Christian creeds in order that they could survive the impact of the Greek and Roman cultures. The Apostolic Fathers (St. Clement, St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp and others), inspired by the Holy Spirit, interpreted the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Fathers known as Apologists (the Defenders of the Faith) described the glory of Christian faith and defended the faith against the persecutors of Christians. The Church also was threatened from within by heretics. So, the Christian doctrines came to be written down

with a view to preserving the true faith. Besides, the common forms of worship also contained the doctrines and helped their easy spread.

Christian theology has different sources. The traditions (written and unwritten) that include the Bible are important among them. From time to time the Church had made studies based on the Bible. These studies often went beyond the limits of the written Bible (Galatians 1:8, 2, These. 2:15, Hebrew 2:1, Colossians 4:16, St. John 20:30). The church interpreted and explained the Bible, in accordance with the guidance given by the Holy Spirit. The books, liturgical works, the creed, the hymns and prayers composed by the Holy Fathers of the Church and the pronouncements of the Councils too became sources of theology.

The Greek word 'Paradosis' is used in the Bible to mean 'handed down'. St. Paul says: 'So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter' (2. Thess. 2:15). He also asks the early Christians to 'maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you' (1 Cor. 11:2). In another context he speaks of 'the traditions that you received from us' (2 Thess. 3:6). St. Paul makes it clear that he has received them from the Lord (1 Cor. 11:23). How could St. Paul have received them except through the Church to which he belonged? We ought to hold fast to the traditions handed down by our Lord, the Apostles and the Fathers through the Holy Church.

The oral teachings of the Apostles came to be practised in the Church. They had written down only a part of their teachings. The Bible itself says that it does not contain everything (St. John. 20:30). The traditions of the Church as well as the written Bible came into existence from the active fellowship of the congregation of worshippers. When the Gnostics and others spread heresies, St. Ireneous (in the latter half of the 2nd century) proved that the traditions of the Church had Apostolic authority. He explained that the traditions emerged from Apostolic succession as well as from the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

An active tradition of faith, order and worship still exists in the Church. The worship, sermons, hymns and observance of the Church prove that this tradition is based on the Bible. It is indisputable that the Bible is the touchstone of faith and spiritual life. It is also the most important factor of the tradition of the Church. Tradition is the mind of the church. No one can write down everything that he knows or experiences.

The canons, the creeds and the outline of religious observances of the Church are the 'paradosis' effected by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles. Evangelists and the Fathers of the Church. The Bible and the tradition are not self-contradictory, but complementary. It is wrong to think that they are two different sources of faith. The Bible has a unique place in the tradition of the Church. The Fathers of the Church have always regarded the Bible as the primary witness.

The Fathers of the Church have given the following insights into the basic principles of the study of Christian theology.

1. The fact of the Incarnation cannot be separated from the Church and its growth resulting from the Incarnation.
2. The Bible is only a part of the tradition in the Church. Unwritten laws also form part of the tradition. Though it is true that the Bible is the touchstone of theological truths, the Church cannot accept the view that the Bible alone is the source of theology.
3. Words and expressions are inadequate to convey fully or correctly the theological truths. It is to be admitted that there are limits to human powers of perception, understanding and expression. Symbols and signs enable eternal truths to be expressed more clearly.
4. Theology should not be merely theoretical; it should as well be practical. It is said that science gains in importance because of its practical application. In theology too, theory and practice must go hand in hand.
5. Man should not only aim at the salvation of his own soul but also be rightly aware of man's existence and his duties. The Fathers of the Church teach us that man stands in between God

and the world, participating in both, and transfiguring the world for the glory of God.

6. Man's knowledge of the mysteries of God is a gift from Him. It is also the reflection of His will. It cannot be gained by our effort alone.

7. However learned we become, yet there will be many things hidden from us. Our knowledge and outlook will always be imperfect and incomplete.

8. It is the Holy Spirit that guides us in our search for truth.

6. Symbols and Mediums

Man has to depend on mediums within the limits of time and space to learn about God who is beyond these limits. For example, the paternal love of God can be grasped only by a parent or a child; we should either be a parent loving our children or be children experiencing the love of parents to appreciate God's love for us. In the same way, we can learn and experience every attribute of God through similar mediums. Our senses, namely seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching play a part in this. These senses and the experience gained through them influence us. When we listen to a melodious Christian song or when we breathe in the fragrance of incense, we find ourselves transported to a heavenly Christian world. Similarly, when we extend our hands for the kiss of peace during the Holy Qurbana, and when we receive the Holy Communion, we have the same experience. To a great extent, our mind and intelligence are controlled by our senses. So, it is not possible to experience God through our study of theology alone.

The miraculous achievements of science have not been able to define the mysteries of God that are beyond the utmost limits of human intelligence. Even the most powerful telescopes of

today cannot reveal the secrets of the universe beyond a certain limit. We cannot properly explain the transcendence and immanence of God. Martin Buber says. 'God cannot be expressed, but, only addressed.'

We are able to have communion with God and to experience His presence through worship. St. Paul writes that in worship 'We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit' (2 Cor. 3:18). By worship we do not mean the activity of the mind and thought of a person. But we mean the concerted endeavour of the body, mind and soul. It is the whole individual that takes part in worship. Worship is not a mere observance. One, who takes part in the Holy Qurbana with concentration and piety, cannot but say responses and join in the hymns. It is wrong to consider the presence of God in worship merely as an exercise of intellectual faculties. In fact, worship is our communion with God at the summit of our thoughts and feelings.

God who had existed in this world in the form of Logos from the beginning came into the world in the image of man in order that man should believe. Moreover, saying: 'This is my body', 'This is my blood', He gave His disciples bread and wine as the mystery of mysteries so that they could partake of His own body and blood. Participation in this mystery enables us to enter deeper into the acts of God. The symbols and images should be viewed by us as the unwritten and unspoken language of faith. Christ gave us the cross as the most important symbol of redemption. Things that cannot be comprehended by our intellect can better be comprehended through symbols and images. But they are not understood by the uninitiated.

Every sign or gesture that the priest makes while performing the Holy Qurbana has an essential meaning. For example, the prayers he offers facing the east symbolise the prayers and worship that the Church offers to God. So too, the benediction he gives facing the west are meant to be the blessings given by God to man. It may be remembered that the mediums used in the

Orthodox Churches (curtain, bells, church utensils and the like) have deep spiritual significance.

The icons seen inside the Orthodox Church constitute another medium through which we can experience the nearness of God. The icons help us to move from the wordly sphere to the spiritual sphere. We know that among the early Christians symbols like doves, fish, shepherd, etc. were popular and that these carried great Christian messages. The Fathers of the Church teach us that the icon that represents the presence of God is a revelation and divine presence and that it is not a mere decoration or description. The icons reveal the realities of the Kingdom of God. They are holy since they stand distinctly for divine purposes. The icons reveal the mysterious beauty of divine revelation. The Christian thinker, Nicholas Zernov, has stated that the 'icon is a part of the transformed universe'. Referring to the sacramental function of the Church, Zernov observes: 'If water is essential at the time of baptism for the baptised to be cleansed of sin and if bread and wine at the Eucharist are essential for man's communion with God, the icons too serve a useful purpose in establishing a spiritual fellowship between the saints and Fathers of the Church, who are no more, on the one hand, and the living members of the Church on the other hand., (The Christian East, Page' 83).

The symbols and signs are thus windows on the visible and invisible worlds.

Theological truths are the essence of the holy sacraments. Theology views the holy sacraments as the medium of communion between God, the Creator, and man, the creature. Thus the holy sacraments and theology are reflections of the Church which is the visible body of Christ. The Holy Qurbana is the acme of all sacraments as it is through the Holy Qurbana that all other sacraments reach their perfection. The outward signs used in the Holy Qurbana are the outward reflections of the presence of God. Through these outward signs we are able to confirm our faith. The visible signs are helpful to awaken the urge for worship that lies dormant in us.

As a social being, man is easily attracted towards visible things. Visible things, signs and actions, therefore, help man establish communion with God through his sensory perceptions. The Holy Bible describes many instances of divine revelation through individuals and through nature. The greatest revelation that God has given of Himself to the world is through the Holy Incarnation.

Worship in the Orthodox Churches is designed in such a way as to ensure that all aspects of the worshipper's personality become fully engrossed in it. Bible reading, prayer, hymns, sermons and responses appeal to the sense of hearing as well as to the tongue. The burning of incense appeals to the sense of smell and bread and wine to the sense of taste. Practices like lent, fasting, bowing of the head, kneeling down, procession and the kiss of peace are conducive to the mind and the body.

The symbols and signs used in the holy sacraments are neither lifeless nor meaningless. On the contrary, they are repositories of great mysteries. The great scholar, Frank Norris, while establishing the connection between the mysteries of the holy sacraments and the mystery of the Incarnation writes: 'In the same way as Jesus Christ during the days of His ministry as the Incarnate used His physical and spiritual power to reveal the nature and fellowship of God, wine, water, bread, signs, sermons and hymns are intended to reveal the mysteries of God and to invite participation in them'. In short, words, symbols and signs are the heart and pulse of theology,

7. Theology and Science

Science has been helpful to the growth of knowledge, industrial development and cultural progress. It has improved the means of communication and contributed much to health care prevention of diseases agriculture and eradication of supersti-

tions. All the same science is not an unmixed blessing. Its drawbacks are equally weighty. Science has precipitated the threat of nuclear war and atmospheric pollution. The misuse of science poses a threat to the existence of mankind. The belief that science is nothing but a friend has been shaken. It is difficult to find a satisfactory answer to the question how far science is helpful to man in his search for truth and in his choice of the good.

Can we claim that the findings of science are final? Are reason and commonsense dependable? Scientific reasoning may help us to foretell things. Science cannot claim certainty, but can point out possibilities and probabilities. The sun rises in the east; since it did so yesterday and today, it is probable that it will do so tomorrow. Scientists do not claim that they can find out the ultimate truth.

Scientific means and definitions may change. New means and definitions are invented in order to deal with new problems. When the new findings are made, the old ones become irrelevant or erroneous. In short, science cannot make an ultimate analysis of anything.

Let us take the example of the atom. At first the atom was considered to be indivisible. Later, it was thought of as a miniature solar system consisting of electrons, protons and neutrons. But now it is believed that there are innumerable nuclear particles connected with them. The present concept of the atom may again change. Thus the findings of science cannot explain the universe as it is. Science confines itself to certain conclusions. Conclusions, revelations and traditions are important alike in theology and in science. Science is personal and material. It is generally agreed that science is not a path that leads to impersonal truths.

The materialistic view that religion has always been an obstacle to science, that science could move towards its goal only after freeing itself from the hold of religion and that religion is a curse to science, is shared by many. On the other hand, there are others who believe that science is against religion, just

because science freed itself from religion and developed independently. Both these views are not tenable.

Theology does not regard man as mere matter but as one having personality. Theology aims at the ultimate truth. The view of Jacques Monod that the origin of the universe was accidental is clearly illogical. So, theologians reject this view. They lay emphasis on the existence of an ultimate force that has reason and intelligence transcending beyond the reason and intelligence of man. It is imperative that there should be a model that reflects the design of this original force. Theology gives the interpretation of this model.

Theology does not have any reason to compete with science about the order of material realities. Both are complementary. One interprets the cause and the other interprets the effect'. The law of conservation of mass propounded by Sir Isaac Newton was proved to be wrong by the middle of the 20th century. Modern science says that everything has a beginning and an end. It, however does not explain the causative and creative force behind this mortal world. But theology explains it. Theology effectively interprets the order of creation and the purpose behind it.

The Bible is not a storehouse of scientific principles or definitions. Science and theology do not give the same answer to the basic question of epistemology. Theology teaches that real knowledge is obtained by active personal participation. The knowledge and dimension that the changing man gets about the changing universe also will change. But theology gives the knowledge that the unchangeable God has given to man through His unchangeable revelations. Theology is capable of giving us the right insight into God and the universe.

St. Gregory of Nyssa has, in his assessment of man, said: 'As a creature, man is capable of thought, imagination, forethought and critical assessment.' The Fathers of the East point out that art, philosophy and science, as we find them today have evolved from the gifts given to man by God.

The limits of man's knowledge about God, God's relation to man and the world as the Creator, and the value and position

given to man are all within the purview of theology. In the study of theology, science may be used as a key to open the secret cellars of Christian mystery. Christian theology proclaims that revelation is necessary for understanding reality. Whether it be scientific knowledge, philosophical analysis or revealed knowledge, no knowledge will be perfect; knowledge can only be imperfect and partial.

8. Revelation and Theosis

Reason is man's quest for truth, but revelation is God's revealing Himself. When Emil Brunner asserts that God can be approached only through God, what he means is that we can understand God only through His revelations. If in logic reason is all important, in theology reason is used to create the rationale behind faith. Reason has its limitations, but God has no limitations.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of revelation thus: 'In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the World' (Hebrews 1:1). Plato describes the soul of man as a chariot with two horses. one white and the other black (passion and reason). These horses pull the chariot in opposite directions. Then doubts emerge. Doubts lead to search and search leads to truth, through revelation. Man has freedom to think, act, believe or disbelieve. Reason or search is the process of gaining more knowledge out of our present knowledge by using intelligence. Reason also enables man to distinguish between right and wrong. However, the Christian belief is that man cannot know God until He reveals Himself to man.

Is revelation a continuing process or has it happened only once? Christianity is based on one everlasting revelation; It is

at the same time a spiritual enlightenment that grows through the abiding faith in this one everlasting revelation.

Paul Tillich has classified divine revelation into primary revelation and secondary revelation. The primary revelation or the Incarnation of Christ still remains in the Church as the most lively revelation. And the Church is alive and active in this state through the working of the Holy Spirit. It is through the Holy Eucharist that this change is completed in the Church. The devotees approach God through communion in the Holy Qurbana, experience the presence of God and share in His divinity.

Revelations do not minimise the importance of reason or reject it. On the contrary, they sharpen reason. Man's conscious mind accepts facts and responds to them. Thus emotional experience is clearly present in all mental activities.

The relation between reason and revelation can have two aspects. On the one hand, reason may be a means to achieve revelation; on the other hand, it may be a subject for revelation. Reason itself is of two kinds—concrete and abstract. Revelation also may be divided into two: general and particular.

The Holy Bible mentions five different kinds of revelation. These are:

1. revelation through nature (Psalms 19:2, Isaiah 40:26, 2 Samuel 5:24, Psalms 18:14, 29:3)
2. revelation through emotional experience (dreams, visions) (Isai. 6:1)
3. revelation through words (Leviticus 19:32, 34, 36)
4. revelation through individuals i. e. prophets, angels etc. (Genesis 16:9, 22:11, Isaiah 23:25–32, 27:9)
5. the Incarnation of Christ, the crown of revelation (Romans 1:18–21). Today the Church interprets and teaches the meaning of these revelations.

Revelations are made acceptable through subjective ecstasy and concrete miracles. When Moses accepted revelation through faith, he experienced ecstasy and a sense of wonder. It is when we accept revelation through faith that we are led to spiritual enlightenment.

The Book of Revelations included in this New Testament speaks about visions, signs and symbols. This has resulted in many distortions and misinterpretations. The interpretations have to be made in the light of the teachings and guidelines of the Church. The interpretations that are not useful to the 'oikonomia' or building up of the Church are to be rejected.

Our Lord takes to task the generation that seeks miracles and signs. Even today we come across in society this search for miracles and signs. We cannot view this tendency as a sign of spiritual exaltation. Nor can we encourage this. We can look upon this only as a straying away of devotees into the materialistic sphere of life.

Many problems present themselves when we try to interpret the Incarnation of the Lord, which is the crown of revelations' in the light of the written and unwritten traditions of the Church. Scholars have described this process in different ways: they call them linguistic interpretation, logical interpretation, historical interpretation, theological interpretation and the interpretation based on individual experience. It is quite natural that personal prejudices and misconceptions crop up when we try to interpret a subject or a fact. The complexity of the problems depends on the relation of the interpreter to the subject that he interprets.

Interpreters may belong to different cultural traditions. This fact leads to different interpretations on the same subject. It is quite likely that one may give undue importance to individual experiences or to one factor among many. (For example, one may overemphasise certain verses in the Holy Bible and ignore other verses). An interpretation becomes true only if the interpreter takes himself into the horizon of the subject and identifies himself with it. Since this complete identification of the interpreter with the subject is not possible, any interpretation is likely to be imperfect.

It is not by remembering the redemptive deeds of Jesus Christ alone, but by going deep into the world of redemptive deeds through worship and by living them that we meaningfully take part in the life of the Church. Such a meaningful participation eliminates the historical difference between our world and

the world of Christ, and we become aware that reason fails in properly interpreting the mysteries of faith. The impact of the symbols, observances and signs used in worship is then felt as real experience, and not as a mere memory of the past. An individual cannot plunge into this experience all by himself. He does so along with his fellowmen. Theology ought to be, therefore, sacrificial. The sacrificial elements in the act of the Incarnation ought not to be ignored.

The body and the soul join together while taking part in worship. Matter is a holy creation. When man attempts to transform it, he becomes an intermediary between God and the world. We cannot accept the view that we need work only for the salvation of the soul, separating the spiritual from the worldly. Theological studies and interpretations are to be bound up with life. We cannot run away from contemporary problems. Our theological studies and interpretations help us tackle life's problems, when we go deep into the spiritual sphere.

An examination of the unconscious levels of the mind takes place in worship. Changes take place in him. Objective mediums and signs help him in this process of change.

The perspective of the Eastern Church is based more on experience of life than on certain laid-down doctrines. This perspective insists that theology helps us get rid of certain misconceptions. Theology is not an end in itself but a means to an end. It proclaims the limitations of words. The Eastern Church teaches us that in the life of the Church, which is based on worship divine revelations occur. When the truth is written down, it ceases to be the absolute truth. So, man experiences the ultimate truth that is beyond language and laws, through holy worship. Meditation, silence and symbols hasten this process.

Eastern theology points to the spheres above reason even without neglecting reason. It does not ignore history and the sinful state of man. Instead of trying to contain the ultimate truth in the brain, it teaches us a life of worship based on the Holy Qurbana and a life of sacrifice. Eastern theology also teaches us that we can grow from glory to glory through such a life. This infinite growth in goodness is termed 'Theosis' or divinization.

9. The Existence of God

The awareness of God influences everyone in one way or the other. Today, atheism is the religion of some. The definition of matter given by atheists that it is everlasting comes close to the definition of God given by theists that He is everlasting. Every religion has its own traditions, beliefs and thought processes. Man's intellectual ability cannot cope with the effort of discovering the essence of God. He experiences the presence of God through the experiences of his faith-oriented life. This spiritual experience attained through faith cannot be rejected as an expression of a mere illusion. God has given every man the ability to have communion with Him and to experience the mysteries of eternal truths by going into the depths of spirituality.

Christianity proclaims the one true God that was incarnate in Christ through the Holy Spirit. God is not what we arrive at as a conclusion at the end of a debate. Faith is the leaping up of the soul into the infinite, eternal truth. St. Paul says: 'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is at once the gift of God and the determination of man. The Christian view is that faith in God has evolved through ages and through God's own revelation. No rational quest can find out a complete answer to the question of faith in God.

Some theologians have, however, attempted to prove the existence of God through logical reasoning. Their arguments can be grouped as follows:

The Ontological Argument is the argument that an idea has a reality behind it. God is a conception in the mind of everyone. It is not possible to do away with this idea. There might certainly be a reality behind this idea.

According to the Cosmological Argument, everything has a cause. There is also a cause for the beginning of everything.

And this is God. But God does not have a cause. We can call God the First cause or an uncaused, self-existent Being.

The Theological Argument elucidates that there must be a designer for everything. There is a special aim and purpose (Telos-end) behind the order and progress in the universe. Only an immanent intelligence superior to human intelligence can control and guide the universe. It is as a result of precise calculations that man-made satellites revolve round the earth. If so, the intelligence of the controller who guides and controls the movements of the heavenly bodies in fixed orbits in the solar system is beyond description.

Immanuel Kant, the philosopher, introducing the Moral Argument to disprove the existence of God, later repented and wrote thus: 'The powerful moral judgement of the conscience points to the existence of God'. Conscience and moral rules can only be thought of as given by God. Our conscience proves that there is God. From a moral religion, moral norms and ideals emerge. Aristotle has observed that we can find a moral God behind a moral religion. Kant too has said that God must exist if the moral order is to be intelligible.

Thomas Aquinas analysed the existence of God as follows:

Movement originated from God.

God, the First Cause, is the source of power.

Material objects are not self-made. They have a beginning and an end. God is their cause.

The universe has been created with a purpose.

We can regard truth, goodness and beauty as the attributes of God. We can see the goodness of God through the beauty of nature and through the gifts given to the animals to live according to the rules of nature.

We may say that religion originated along with the creation of man. As he was created in the likeness of God, man started his search for God. The history of the world shows that nothing else can make man better as religion can. But the fact cannot be forgotten that the misuse of religion had terrible consequences in the past.

Through the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Bible helps us to understand the ways of God and the traditions of the Church. God has spoken to man from time to time through the departed saints and through His own words and deeds. God revealed Himself to the Israelites who were His chosen people (Deuteronomy 6:7). The Holy Bible gives importance to the very existence of God and to His deeds rather than to any proof about the existence of God. The Holy Bible bears testimony to God's revelations, His grace, compassion justice and love.

The will of God is more important than the will of man. Abraham heard the voice of God and obeyed it. He submitted himself to the will of God. Moses understood God's plan of redemption to be effected through him. The prophets revealed to the people the will and purpose of God. The Psalms and the Proverbs reveal the feelings, thoughts and wishes of those who were faithful to God. In Christ we find the culmination of all this.

Faith in God makes man obedient. It helps him face the sorrows and sufferings of this world and gives him a sense of security and hope. Faith encourages us to co-operate with others and share with them what is good. The Holy Bible enables us to see a God that speaks and acts through human life, through history and through nature. God revealed Himself through Christ in all His perfection. God is the beginning and the end, the way and the purpose as well as the source of all love and goodness.

The Holy Bible does not deal with what man thinks about God, but with what he thinks and acts with God and what God does for him. Man finds entry into the presence of God through prayer and worship. He has been given the gift of understanding the divine revelation through prayer and worship. The divine revelation is not a hidden reality; nor is it an event of the past recorded in the Holy Bible. It cannot be critically analysed. The divine mysteries become clearer and clearer to those who seek the deeds and redemptive plans of God the Father and to those who identify themselves with Him.

We see the dexterity of God through His creation. Our knowledge about this world is partial and incomplete. We can

define the relation between man and God in the light of the relation between man and the world and that between God and the world. St. Gregory of Nyssa explains it thus: 'Man and this world are creations. Both participate in the ordering of the reality of creation. Both were created out of nothing. The creation can exist only according to the will of the Creator. Man and the world have their beginning and end. Both are limited by time and space. Both are subject to decay, and changeability. It is the creative power of God that has given man and the world their existence. But man alone was created in the likeness of God. Man is related to the world as well as to God. Man's presence and love are carried into the world through man, the mediator. The real man is in communion with God and with the world. Faith, worship, love and good deeds are the signs of this communion''

The relationship between man and God is mystical. Words are inadequate to measure the depth of this mystical relationship. Man is the mediator between the Creator and the created. Man undergoes a metamorphosis through worship and good deeds. He guides all the created into this transformation. Our prayer, and worship ought to guide us towards 'divinization, (Theosis) (i. e, the process of redemption from evil and of growth in goodness). We attain this growth when we become one with Christ. A new humanity came into being through the death and resurrection of Christ. The redemption that God, the Father proclaimed in the Old Testament was fulfilled by the Son of God in the New Testament.

10. God and Mankind

The greatest contribution of the Jewish religion to the world is the preservation of monotheism. Nowhere in history can we come across a race that has kept up unaltered the belief in the

only one God. The Jewish religion saw God as the source of all morality and goodness. So, this religion laid stress on moral values.

The Jewish faith in one God as recorded in the Old Testament developed through different periods:

1. The period between Abraham and Amos.

God was one among many. The Canaanites accepted Baal as their national God. In the same way the Jews accepted Jehovah as their God.

2. The period between Amos and Isaiah II.

Jehovah was looked upon as the God of all nations and of all the world. He was the only one God in heaven and earth. Other deities were all man-made. The Israelites were the chosen people of Jehovah with whom He entered into a covenant. So they had a special relationship with God.

The following were the cardinal points of the monotheism of the Israelites during this period:

- a. Jehovah would sit in judgement over the Israelites' neighbours especially over their enemies.
- b. The Israelites would be sanctified and reinstated.
- c. The holy temple would be turned into a centre of worship.
- d. The Israelites would prosper when they followed goodness and would perish when they followed the path of sin.

3. The period after the Israelites' exile in Babel.

During the days of their exile, the faith of the Israelites in God was subjected to severe trials and ordeals. The period of exile worked like fire on their faith; it purified, strengthened and shaped their faith into a noble one. They evolved the following ideas during their exile, and held on to them.

- a. *About God and the world.* God is the creator and controller of the universe. The will of God is fulfilled in the world through His word, wisdom, spirit and His angels. God is active in the world. He has not kept aloof from the world after the creation.
- b. *About God and mankind.* God is not only the creator and controller of the world or nature but is also the creator of mankind.

and the ruler who wields power over the nations of the world. In the fullness of time, He will establish His kingdom on earth. This hope became greatly strengthened through the apocalyptic literature.

c. About God and man. Man can keep intimate contact with God, his creator, and can call Him Abba or Father.

d. About worship and its meaning. Bliss and fellowship with God are experienced through services in the temple. In other words, it is through worship in the temple that communion with God becomes a reality.

Here follows the Names of God in the Old Testament

1. *El-Elohe*—We find this name for God in Genesis 33:20.

2. *Yahweh*—It is by this name that God is commonly known in the Old Testament. This is an ancient name. It has been the name of the God of Israelites since the time of Moses. 'Yah' is the short form of 'Yahweh'.

e. g. *Elijah*—Jehovah is my God.

Hallelujah—Praise be to the Lord.

This is a meaningful name that praises God in his act of salvation.

3. *Adonai* (the Lord)—This name also is common in the Old Testament. It implies the lordship of God. He is the master who dictates to man and is obeyed by man. It slowly led to the idea of God, the King (Deuteronomy 33:5, Isaiah 6:5, Psalms 4:7)

4. *El-Sadai* (Almighty)—This word denotes the lordship and omnipotence of Jehovah (Gen. 49:25)

5. *Elion* (the most high)—This term means that He is higher than all and has power over all.

6. *El-Hai* (God who lives)—The Gentile gods have death. But Jehovah lives for ever. (Deut. 5:26, Hosea 1:10, Jerem. 23:36, Psalms 42:2.) The Israelites wanted to be called the children of the living God.

7. *Jehovah*—This means Jehova (God), the Father. We come across this name only very rarely in the Old Testament (2 Samuel 7:14, Deut. 32:6).

Can we look upon God, who is unbegotten, abstract and self-existent as a person? The Holy Bible answers 'yes'. The idea of person itself comes from God. Even before God revealed Himself through Christ, He appeared to the Fathers in the Old Testament as the one, good, merciful and true God. They had experienced through their lives the presence and deeds of God. He revealed Himself to be the Alpha and Omega, and self-existent. He is not only the creator and preserver but also the saviour.

God is always dynamic. The creation that he made out of nothing is the expression of His personality. Man is the acme of His creation. In the same way as an artist's personality is reflected in his paintings, the personality of God is reflected in the creation of man. The story of God who is unique and most merciful and most loving is proclaimed by the Holy Fathers (Exodus 20:3, Deut. 4:39, 6:4, Isai. 43:10, 45:5 Zachar. 14:9 etc.) The writers of the New Testament have followed the example of the Holy Fathers (St. Matth. 23:9. St. John 17:3, 1 Corinth 8:4, Ephesians 4:6 etc.).

What do we understand by referring to God as a person?

1. Man can have personal relationship with God. Similarly God also can have relationship with man.
2. The microcosm that is man, becomes a part of the macrocosm that is God. Personality, partnership and communication are the basis of the relationship between man and God.
3. God's complete partnership within Himself makes Him a perfect person (the Holy Trinity).
4. Love is the hallmark of personality. The love that God gives distributes and receives is the basis of personality.
5. God alone can be called 'the person' Man is to be called a person.
6. The fact that God is a person indicates that He is always active. The words of the Lord, 'He who has seen me has seen the Father', are meaningful. A Christian can think about the Father only through Christ. It is Christ who leads us to the truth (God, the Father). Christ who is the perfect man and perfect God is 'the perfect person.'

11. Holiness, Justice And Compassion

From time immemorial, man had worshipped God and praised Him for His attributes. In both the Old and the New Testaments we come across these attributes. Some of them are exclusively connected with the essence of God, while some others are connected with creation. When we say that God is spirit, truth, infinite and perfect, we get an idea about His existence, oneness and unchangeable nature. When we say that God is omnipotent, omnipresent and the Lord of all, we think of Him in connection with creation. These impressions come from the fact that He is the creator. All these attributes are expressions of divine revelation against a background of human limitations and circumstances.

The attributes of God are inseparable from the idea of God. God is the source, the cause and the end of all goodness, truth and beauty. The three important attributes of God mentioned in the Old Testament are holiness, justice and compassion.

In Semitic languages 'Holy' means 'the separated'. It means separated from worldliness. 1 Samuel 21:4 refers to the hallowed bread and Numbers 6:8 speaks of the person being holy unto the Lord during the days of his separation. The term is used in the Holy Bible in some other contexts too to refer to God as 'The Holy One of Israel'. In 1 Samuel 6:52, the men of Beth-Shemesh ask: 'Who is able to stand before the Lord, this holy God?' The Lord of Israel is praised thus: 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the lord of hosts' (Isaiah 6:3).

The glory of the Lord and His Holiness are revealed to Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1). The Holy Lord of Israel demands from His people the same holiness and virtue. The prophet declares: 'The Lord of hosts is exalted in justice and the holy God shows himself holy in righteousness' Isaiah 5:16. Man is expected to receive holiness and virtue from the Lord and share the same with His fellowmen.

God's glory and holiness are revealed on Mount Sinai by thunder and lightning (Exod. 20:18).

In the Christian perspective this attribute has deep meaning. Our faith in the Trinity is deep-rooted. Man worships the Trinity and grows up in holiness and virtue. Man, made in the image of God, comes into active communion with his fellowmen and shares holiness with them. In the Holy Qurbana, when the priest raises his hands to celebrate the mystery, the assembled respond; 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty by whose praises heaven and earth are full, glory in the highest.'

Rudolf Otto, in his 'Idea of the Holy' points out two things. They are, the reaction of Isaiah when he saw God and the reaction of Peter when he saw Him. Both of them were conscious of their sinful state and wanted to move away. In his vision, Isaiah heard the angels crying out: 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts' (Isaiah 6:3). 'Holy, is repeated thrice here; this indicates the idea of Trinity in the Old Testament. The visions of the prophet, Isaiah, and of the Psalmist are confirmed in the New Testament. In the Holy Qurbana the believers respond by saying: 'The one Holy Father with us, the one Holy Son with us the one Holy Spirit with us'.

The Hebrew language uses the term Zadek, while the Greek language uses 'Dikayosuni' to mean justice. Justice and truth are the attributes of God. He is ever vigilant and eager in keeping them. The Psalmist sings: 'Mighty King, Lover of justice, thou hast established equity' (Psalms 99:4).

As God is just, the sinner is punished. He will never tolerate evil. The significance of justice is brought out in the Old Testament in different ways. 'A full and just weight you shall have, a full and just measure you shall have, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord God gives you' (Deuteronomy 25:15). In Leviticus 19:36, Ezekiel 45:10, Joel 2:23, and Daniel 8:14 also the prophets envisage God as the God of justice.

In the history of Israel during the period of the Old Testament justice was connected with the will of God. 'And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this command-

ment before the Lord our God as He has commanded us (Deut. 6:15). God's will is done when man obeys His commandments and does justice. God revealed His sense of righteousness and justice to Israel. But they ignored His will and went astray. So, God decided to judge them. The prophet warned that it would be the final judgement.

The Old Testament uses different terms for justice. Those who are begin, great, virtuous, compassionate to the neighbours, merciful towards the poor and the weak, considerate to the aggrieved, respectful to parents and trustworthy are described as the dispensers of justice of the Lord. The attributes such as benignity, virtue, compassion, etc. also are treated as synonyms of justice and they are considered essential for His creatures.

Benignity, patience and love are the permanent attributes of God. God's mercy becomes manifest to those who keep His covenant. Faith in Him and obedience to Him make us worthy of His mercy. God gave His commandments and promises to mankind, revealed Himself in history and redeemed His people. Thus He has shown Himself to be the seat of mercy. He is the Lord of even those who do not know Him. The prophets have described in detail how God threw open the doors of mercy to other races besides the Israelites. They point out that God's love that redeemed the Israelites from slavery and brought them to the promised land is infinite.

We become worthy of His mercy by putting our trust in God. The Old Testament reveals that man's freedom is dependent on the mercy of God (Deut. 30:9, Lamentation 16:1,33).

It was through Christ, the mediator, that the relationship between man and God was re-established. The writers of the New Testament warn us against forgetting the love of God that became manifest in the sacrifice on the cross. 'if you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who does right is born of him' (1 John 2:29). 'But even if you do suffer for righteousness, sake, you will be blessed' (1 Pet. 3:14).

The epistles of St. Paul reveal that the holiness, righteousness and benignity of God are proclaimed through Christ.

12. Creation And Its Perfection

We have no direct information about creation. We know that there were no eye-witnesses to the act of creation. It is our faith that enables us to learn about creation. The first two chapters of Genesis give us an account of creation. The chapters give us an account of God performing the act of creation through His word and making man with His own hands and giving him dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth (Genesis 1:26). Here the stress is not on the mode of creation but on the Creator.

Different scholars have pondered over the act of creation and put forward different theories. We shall deal with some of them before we come to the Christian conception of Creation.

1. *Dualism.*

There are two ultimate truths in this world (good and evil). According to this theory, the world is the battlefield of these two conflicting truths. Zoroastrianism believes in two self-existent eternal truths, namely, good and evil. Ahuramazda is the god of virtue and Angra Manu is the god of evil.

2. *The Theory of Emanation.*

Creation emanated from God as rays emanate from the sun. This theory has no Biblical basis. According to this theory, good and evil in their real images originated from God and descended to the earth. The theory implies that the act of creation was not the work of God done out of His own free will. On the contrary, the theory hints at evolutionary transformation resulting in different forms of creation.

3. *Cosmic Egg Theory*

This theory derives from the Babylonian mythology. It states that the earth and all its objects are the result of a huge explosion in a large egg that existed in the beginning.

4. *Spontaneous Creation Theory*

According to this theory the world came into existence spontaneously. Neither God nor any external force had any role in it.

5. *Eternal Creation Theory*

This theory insists that the world in itself is everlasting and without a beginning and an end. The genius of God, the supreme power, is not manifest in it.

6. *Illusion Theory*

This theory is a contribution of Indian Philosophy. God alone is the reality. The universe visible to us is not real. Our ignorance makes us feel that it is real. When we attain real knowledge-that is, the knowledge of God,-we bid farewell to this illusory universe and become one with Brahma.

7. *Deism*

Deism admits that God created this universe, but insists that He keeps himself away from the world without involving Himself in it. It is like the aloofness of a watchmaker who lets the watch tick on by itself once it is made.

8. *Pantheism*

God is present in all objects in the world. Because of this belief many religions lay emphasis on Nature-worship.

9. *Pan-en-theism*

According to this theory all things in the world exist in Brahma.

10. *Materialist Doctrine.*

This doctrine says that all movable and immovable things have evolved from matter that existed from the beginning,

11. *Evolutionary Theory.*

Charles Darwin is the originator of this theory. Man and other creatures came into being as a result of evolution. Man has evolved from apes.

Christians believe that God created the world out of nothing (The absolute Infinity that is immeasurable and incomprehensible

and is beyond objective realities is what is termed as 'non-existence' by the Fathers and what seems to be 'nothingness' in the human eye).

Creation reveals God's will, genius and might. It is through creation and the created that God has exercised his will. 'For from him and through him and to him are all things' (Romans 11:36). 'As I have planned so shall it be, and as I have proposed, so shall it stand' (Isaiah 14:24). The New Testament testifies that God created the world through Christ. 'He is before all things, and in him all things hold together' (Colossians 1:17)

While dealing with creation, an important question that is likely to arise is: When did time originate? There are three views on this:

1. There was time before creation.
2. God created time after creating other things.
3. God created time along with other things.

Christianity accepts the third view.

God's time which is beyond history (a day can be thousand years) is called 'chronos'. With the advent of Christ these two kinds of time are synchronised.

God created the world out of nothing. Nothing that is created can create itself. Nothingness can never grow into anything concrete. There cannot be semi-existence between nothingness and existence. The mortality of the world suggests that it has been created and the immortality of God suggests that He is the Creator.

According to St. Gregory of Nyssa (A D. 330-395) creation is a medium extended to the middle of time and space. God who is beyond the limits of time and space extended certain things to the limits of time and space and that is creation. Creation is the change from nothingness to existence. All existence sprang up from nothingness and will return to nothingness. The created existence is mortal. It is constantly getting disintegrated. Let us consider the flame of a lamp. The part of the flame that leaps up dies off. But it is followed by successive tongues of

flames so that the flame seems to remain the same. Suppose someone touches a tongue of flame; he cannot touch it more than once. This phenomenon illustrates that both creative and destructive processes are going on simultaneously.

For example, the cells in the human body die every moment. But new cells take the place of the dead ones. They play an important role in the growth of the human body. St. Gregory says that all created objects are capable of two kinds of motion. The created object goes on moving towards another object. Besides, the same object has internal motion. The created being has a beginning and an end. The being emerges from nothingness; also, it returns to nothingness and merges with the Ultimate Being.

The created is not self-made or self-existent. The created has the image and nature given by the Creator. The created exists subject to the will of the Creator. He is bound to fulfil the will of the Creator. He can imbibe goodness and preserve it only if he shares in the goodness of the Creator and keeps in constant touch with Him.

The early Fathers of the Church have divided the created beings into different groups. 1. angels; 2. human beings; 3. lesser creations; 4. demonic forces.

Man is the best and the first of creations. He is the centre and crown of creations. All creatures have a role in the redeeming work of God. Creation is the process by which God gives concreteness to endless potentialities, and order and perfection to chaos. This process is still going on. The entire creation is fast heading towards perfection and glory.

The created beings need God's protection. His protection and nurturing help them manifest the virtues and qualities of the Creator. God's grace and blessings enable them to preserve and nurture the virtues imbibed by the created beings. There are different views on the protection and preservation God extends to the created beings. These views are given below:

1. *Consistent Deism*

God always keeps far away from his creatures. He does not

interfere with their activities. He has given them the right to act on their own initiative.

2. *Theistic Deism*

Theistic Deism on the other hand insists that God interferes with the affairs of the creatures on such occasions as earthquakes natural calamities and miracles.

3. *Consistent Theism*

The theory of consistent theism asserts that God is always keen on the preservation of His creatures and that He is always in contact with mankind.

The Holy Bible witnesses that God is the preserver, controller and the Lord of all. He works every moment through his creatures. The providence of God becomes manifest in the protection and preservation that He extends to the created. God is not interested in the destruction of His creatures. He expects man to know Him and to move along the right path. He loves all His creatures and protects them from straying off the right path. God does not want anyone to be condemned to eternal damnation,

The blessings that God gives His creatures are the signs of His providence. This shows God's attitude in His relation with man. The idea that links the Old Testament to the New Testament is the providence of God. There are different conceptions about the providence of God; these are mentioned below:

1. *Teleological Optimism*

Everything has been created and preserved for goodness and happiness which alone constitute the final goal.

2. *Harmonistic Way of providence*

Harmony is evident in the order of creation. For this harmony to be fruitful man should rid his mind of selfishness and pride. All the phenomena in Nature exhibit this harmony inherent in the universe.

3. *Historical Dialectic*

Forces are at work in the universe; some of them are opposed to one another; others work in harmony. Consequently, new orders and situations emerge. For example, tribal life gave way

to slavery, and slavery led to feudalism; later, communism emerged as an opposing force to fight feudalism and capitalism. Thus mankind in its evolutionary history enters new phases prompted by the providence of God.

It is the providence of God that leads everything to perfection, According to His plan, God works among individuals and in society. God is the beginning and the end.

13. Agape the Perfect Love

Nothing can be kept out of the all-embracing protective hand of God, God's love is connected with creation, and is expressed in the dispensation of justice too. Love evolves itself through a life of sanctity. In the Old Testament, prophet Hosea deals in detail with love (Hosea 3:1, 11:1, 14:4). God manifests to the world His might, wisdom and love through His creatures and their order. The Incarnation and the sacrifice on the cross are the crowning examples of God's love. God the Father reveals Himself to be Almighty, through Jesus Christ.

St. Paul, who finds the power of God in the Cross, says: 'For the word of Christ is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God' (1 Corin. 1:18). Love is the essence of the New Testament (1 John 4:8, 1 John 3:16). Love for God and fear of Him are the two sides of the same coin. No demonic force can subdue the love of God. Power and wisdom are born out of love.

Both the Old and the New Testaments describe the love of God, man's love for Him and man's love for one another. Every Israelite had to offer his prayers twice. The first part of the prayer was about love for God. 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

(Deut. 6:4), (This prayer is known as Shema-Israel or Hear. Oh Israel). The covenant is the expression of love. 'Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God' is part of the covenant, by which God expects from His people obedience, loyalty and self-sacrifice. This love is far more zealous than the love of parents for their children. It is a covenant of love which results in a mystical union that finds no expression in words. The choice of Israel, entry into the promised land, laws of the Lord' experiences and promises are manifestations of God's love.

The covenant of love as expressed in the Synoptic Gospels leads us to the limitless spheres of God's love. Love is the basis and sum—total of God's law. Our Lord makes clear which is the greatest commandment; He says: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.' That is the greatest commandment. It comes first. The second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself' Everything to the Law, and the prophets hangs on these two commandments.' (St. Mathew 22:37-47). Here Christ represents the neighbour or the fellowmen as someone deserving as much love as God. Sabbath is for man and man is not for Sabbath. Reconciliation with one's brother should precede the offering of gift at the altar (St. Matth 5:24). God desires mercy and not sacrifice without mercy (St. Matth. 9:13; 12:7). These words of our Lord teach us that when we love our neighbour we show our love for God. The uniqueness of our Lord's conception of love is that it reveals the relation between one's love for God and one's love for man. Both are inseparable. Our Lord has exalted our love for man to the level of our love for God.

The writers of the New Testament point out the importance and merits of agape. Agape is above emotional love. It is love based on justice. It is Christian love that teaches us reconciliation (St. Matth. 5:23-24); it teaches us to forgive (St. Mathew 18:21-22); it teaches us to do selfless service (St. Mark 10:42-45, St. John 13:1-15). It gives us the heart to help even our enemies (St. Luke 6:35-36). It makes us share our food and clothes with others (St. Matthew 25:31-36, St. Luke 3:11). It teaches us to give shelter to the destitutes and nurse the sick (St. Mathew

25:36), and preach the gospel of redemption to the poor. (St. Matth. 11:5). It redeems the oppressed (St. Luke 11:16-21). It makes us the children of God (St. Matthew 5:45). It redeems us from our sins (St. Luke 7:36-50). It imparts to us the wisdom of God. Agape denotes divine love.

St. John views the passion and crucifixion of our Lord as the reflection of God's love as revealed through Christ. 'Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end' (St. John 13:1). His acts of washing the feet of his disciples and of giving them the commandment of love were a noble expression of the Lord's love. 'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (St. John 13:34-35). What we see in Christ's death on the cross is love at its perfection. Our Lord has said: 'Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' (St. John 15:13).

The love that Jesus received from Father was perfected through his death and resurrection (St. John 10:18). God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son who through his death on the cross fulfilled the will of God and thereby kept his Father's commandment and abided in His love (St. John 10:17, 15:10). In the same way as Christ fulfilled his Father's will, his disciples also must accept his commandment of love, own it and fulfil it with love.

The Greek language uses 'eros' to mean lust, 'storge' to mean love for family and 'philia' to indicate deep love between husband and wife and among friends. But 'agape' indicates the love that does not take into consideration the worth, skill or looks of the person who is loved. This love proceeds from the Holy Ghost. Loving the unlovable is the special aspect of agape. It is with this wide connotation of agape in mind that we should understand the commandment of Christ to love our enemies.

As the Father loved the Son and the world (agape), Jesus loved us. In the mystery of the Incarnation, we see perfect self-

denial and love. 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren (1 John 3:16). This revelation of God's love will attract all men to the Church that is His Body.

St. Paul witnesses that God works all things through love (Ephesians 1:3-10). Having included all the created beings in the wide circle of God's love revealed in and through His only begotten Son, God gathers together all things in Christ, the head (anakephalaiosis or recapitulation). This process takes place through God's love and through the Holy Spirit. The obvious evidence of God's deep love for His creatures is the gift of the Holy Ghost that he has given mankind.

We experience the depth of God's love through the Holy Spirit. The believers can be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, without that power being diminished at all. (1 Thess. 5:9). He who submits himself to the Spirit of God will generate the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, long suffering, gentleness, goodness and faith (Gala. 5:22-25). Like St. Paul we ought to find in the love of the Lord the meaning and the fulfilment of our existence. This love is the cardinal point of creation and of the history of the world. God, the Father has loved us from the beginning and sent His beloved Son into the world as a sign of that love (Gala. 2:20). The Son loved us deeply and gave his life for us; we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to crown that life. 'And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God' (Ephesians 5:2).

The wisdom of God is deeply rooted in devotion and worship, (Proverbs 3:19, Psalms 104:24). Administrative (Genesis 41:32, Deut. 1:13), artistic (Exodus 28:3, Isaiah 40:20), military (Isaiah 10:13), and physical (Psalms 107:27) aspects of wisdom are dealt with in the Old Testament. Different words are used in the Old Testament to express the different aspects of the wisdom of God.

The wisdom of God that is manifested through the act of creation and preservation is connected in the New Testament with the wisdom of Christ (Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3 etc.). The

Holy Bible exhorts us to view God as the real power behind the universe and to give the kingdom, the power and the glory to Him. It also exhorts us to reflect in our own lives the power of God that was reflected through the miracles of Christ.

14. The Kingdom of God

The first books in the Old Testament are called 'torah'. The term means instruction, teachings, directions. 'Torah' is the code of laws that showed the right path to the people of Israel. In the New Testament the Greek term 'nomos' is used to mean 'the law'. These terms are used in the Holy Bible to mean the will of God expressed through His commandments and injunctions.

If before the time of Moses, there was a kind of tribal law, from the time of Moses up to the time of the exile it was the covenant law that was in force (Gene. 12:3). The Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:2–17, Deut. 5:6–12) and the statutes of the covenant (Exod. 20:22–23, 33) were given during this time. The people of Israel received the unwritten and written laws of God. These laws were the expressions of the will of God.

In the Synoptic Gospels, the law of the Lord is connected with the Incarnation. Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil a promise. The early Church in general reacted favourably and at the same time unfavourably to the claims of the law of the Lord.

St. Paul pointed out that the law of the Lord requires sincere repentance and perfect obedience. Perfect obedience is not slavish; nor is it a state of being bound within the limits of the law. On the other hand, it is a means to attain Christian freedom. The New Testament is not a law, but a contract of love and freedom leading to sonship. Phrases like 'the law of faith' (Rom 3:27), and 'the law of Christ' (Galat. 6:2), 'the law of sin' (Rom. 7:23), 'the law of life' (Rom. 8:2) illustrate this truth. St. Paul

explains how the law of the Lord becomes the expression of His will. St. Paul also lays great emphasis on its role in the act of redemption; he connects it to man's freedom and to his faith in God.

'The Kingdom of God' is the translation of the Greek words 'he basileia tou theou.' 'Basileia' literally means rule, supervision, or kingship. It does not mean kingdom. Nor does it mean the territory under God's rule. It means the rule of God. The conception of God's kingship was part of the Hebrew tradition. The prophets of Israel interpreted this idea in detail. The expectation of the Israelites of the coming of Messiah was nourished by this idea.

The Jews were looking forward to the establishment of the Kingdom of God in Judea with Jerusalem as the centre. But the trials and tribulations of the period of exile shattered their hopes. They came to look upon Jehovah as the king of the whole earth. The Jewish religion accepted the universality of the Kingdom of God. They came to believe that their sins stood in the way of the speedy establishment of the Kingdom of God. They longed for the day when the Kingdom of God would be established and redemption and Judgement would follow.

The zealots believed in hastening the establishment of the Kingdom of God through political involvements. Their efforts led to the first Jewish War (A. D. 70). The Pharisees believed that the Kingdom of God would come into being when the chosen people kept the law of the Lord fully. On the other hand, the Sadducees tried to become reconciled to the Roman rule.

John the Baptist who declared that the Kingdom of God was at hand was the herald of Jesus Christ. The Gospels consider the ministry of Christ as the beginning of the Kingdom of God. Christ not only spoke about the Kingdom of God, but also established a society of His Kingdom and sent them for the ministry (St. Luke 22:29 ff, Matthew 19:28, St. Mark 10:42-45, St. Luke 22:23-28).

The apostolic community learnt from their Lord that the cross was a means to enter the Kingdom of God. (Acts.14: 22).

They also learnt that entry into the Kingdom of God meant the sharing of kingship. They learnt from Sermon on the Mount who would have the right to enter His Kingdom (St. Luke 12:33, Psalms 37:11, Exodus 10:6, Daniel 7:22).

The prophecy of Daniel about the saints of the most high (Daniel 7:21 ff) and his visions of the Son of Man influenced the teachings of Christ. He established the Church and meant it to be the community of the saints of the most high. He spoke about the citizenship of the Kingdom of God attained by the members of the Church.

St. Paul reinterpreted the above conception. The Saints who received God's grace and the gift of righteousness in Christ shall be the rulers of the Kingdom that is yet to come (See Rom. 5:17, 1. Cor. 4:8 ff. 1 Cor. 6:2).

St. Peter, in his first epistle points out that the Church is a chosen race, a royal priesthood and a holy nation. This is the fulfilment of the promise that Moses received on Mount Sinai (1 Pet. 2:9,10; Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 20:6). In Israel, kings and priests were anointed. In the same way, we are anointed with the Holy Spirit so that we become subjects of the Kingdom of God and are deputed for the ministry of the royal priesthood. This is what the New Testament tells us. And we understand that worship of God, holy life, ministry and self-sacrifice are also essential factors.

The Kingdom of God remains a great mystery. It is revealed to those who approach it with faith. The parable of the sower illustrates this truth (St. Mark 4:3—9). Many hear the word of the Lord. But holy life is given only to those that find the strait gate (St. Matthew 7:14) 'which leadeth unto life' (St. Luke 13:23). Entrance to the Kingdom of God is limited to the small flock of sheep that hear the call of God and follow Him faithfully (See St. Luke 21:32, St. Mark. 4:11, St. Matthew 13:1—15 Luk. 8:20).

The miracles of Christ aroused the curiosity of the people. Most of them asked from where He got the power of healing and of casting out evil spirits (Mark 11:28). As long as they failed

to understand the source of His power, His miracles were bound to remain a mystery to them. Christ's objective was not to arouse their curiosity but to guide them to the path of repentance, faith and everlasting life (St. Matthew 11:21, St. Luke. 10:13). That is why he refused to Perform miracles at the request of the people

It is the believers and the group that understand the real meaning of miracles and the signs of the Kingdom of God; they alone get the right to enter the Kingdom. We view the miracles and signs of our Lord as the fulfilment of the prophecies in the Old Testament, the signs of the Kingdom of God, emancipation from our state of bondage to the demon, and the signs of the second coming of our Lord.

15. Jesus the Messiah

Throughout the Old Testament there is enough evidence of the Israelites waiting with hope for a deliverer. The Israelites believed that there would come a royal leader who would rule over and bless their entire race. The deliverer whom they looked forward to was called the Messiah. As years in their hundreds passed by, their hope in the deliverer became all the more strengthened.

The word 'Messiah' means the anointed. The temporal ruler of Israel was called the anointed of the Lord. It was this concept of the anointed of the Lord that gave rise to the wider concept of the great deliverer to come. The Greek term 'Christos' gave expression to the same concept of the Messiah. The term 'anointed' is used thirtynine times in the Old Testament. Twentynine times it is used to refer to the King of Israel or the King of Judea. The term is once used to King Cyrus of Persia (Isaiah 45: 1).

During the period that followed the exile, this term was used to refer to the High Priest who wielded royal authority (Leviticus

4:3, 5:16, 6:22, Daniel 9:25-26). In Lamentations 4: 20, the anointed is spoken of as 'the breath of our nostrils' meaning there by that the power of God radiates through the anointed of the Lord. The anointed who was to be born in the house of David was also called 'the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. He was spoken of as the redeemer. The Spirit of the Lord was believed to be the source of his power to work for the salvation of the people of God.

The prophecy of Nathan (2 Sam. 7:5-16, Psalms 88, 1 Chronicles 17:7-14) throws light on the concept of the Messiah. The Lord says: 'Jehovah will build a permanent house for David and will keep for ever the covenant through His Son. Mutual trust is the mark of this covenant.'

Many of the Psalms (2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132) have the Messiah for their theme. These Psalms are known as the royal Psalms. They say: the Messiah is the begotten son of Jehovah (Psalms 2:7); he will come to establish righteousness and law in the land (72:1-4, 12-14); he will shower blessings like the rain that falls on the mown grass or the showers that water the earth (72:6-7); he will defeat all sorts and conditions of enemies (21:8-12); he will reign for ever (21:4, 72:5); the whole world will be subdued by him (2:8, 72:8-11); he is the one completely redeemed from sins (17:41). His people will be sanctified and called the children of God (Psalms 17:30, Rom. 8:15, St. Matthew 5:45, St. John 1:31, 6:14, 7:40, Acts 3:22; 7:37). The above concepts were handed down to the Israelites through generations, and they lived with their hope of the advent of the Messiah.

The Christian writers regard the following portions from the Scriptures as pointers to the coming of the Messiah, that have been fulfilled in Christ (Genesis 3:15). 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the Serpent'. This points to the Virgin Birth and the redemption of mankind.

Genesis 4:3-5 : The offering of Abel reflects Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

Genesis 9:26 : The blessing that Noah gave Shem suggests the plan of redemption through the Semetic race.

Genesis 12:3, 18:18, 22:18 : These are verses about Abraham's call and the promise made to him.

Genesis 14:18-20 : The house of Melchizedek is mentioned (See also Psalms 110:4, Hebrews 7:1-25).

Genesis 22:1-19 : Abraham prepares for the sacrifice of his only son on Mount Moriah which is also the scene of crucifixion.

Genesis 26:4,28:14 : The promise given to Abraham is repeated to Issac and Jacob

Genesis 49:10,11 : The verses deal with the importance of the house of Judea.

The Book of Exodus casts the shadow of a great exodus of the future. The blood of the sacrificed lamb and the blood that was shed on Calvary during Passover proclaim the message of redemption.

The sacrificial rites in the book of Leviticus point to the great sacrifice in history. The serpent made of brass mentioned in Numbers is a milestone in the path of divine redemption. The references to 'the star that comes out of Jacob' and the prophet like Moses are also significant. Joshua, the leader (the Hebrew form of Jesus), Boaz, the redeemer and the warrior in the songs of Baalam (Numbers 24:3-9, 15-19) are all shadows of Christ. Some scholars are of the opinion that Christ was born at the same spot where, 1100 years before Boaz had bought Ruth to be his wife.

Prophet Isaiah heralded the coming of the Messiah (Isaiah 2:2-4, 4:2-6). Symbols like immanuel (Isaiah 7:13, 14), the Wonderful Counsellor (Isaiah 9:1,2,6,7), the rod out of the stem of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1-10) and the suffering servant (Isaiah 53, 54,55,60,61) have theological significance. The life-giving stream described by Ezekiel 34:22-24, 37:24, 25, 47:1-12), the Kingdom of God described by Daniel (Daniel 9:25, 26), the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13) and the deeds of the Spirit described by Prophet Joel point to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Some of the prophecies fulfilled in the New Testament, as recorded in the Gospels alone, are listed below:

1. He will be from the house of David (St. Matthew 22:14, St. Mark 12:36 St. Luke 1:69,70 St. John 7:42, 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Psalms 89:3-4, 110:1 132:11. Isaiah 9:6,7; 11:1).
2. He will be born of a virgin (St. Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 7:14)
3. He will be born in Bethlehem (St. Matthew 2:6, St. John 7:42, Micah 5:2).
4. He will live as an exile in Egypt (St. Matthew 2:15 Hosea 11:1).
5. He will live in Galilee (St. Matthew 4:15, Isaiah 9:12.)
6. He will grow up in Nazareth (St. Matthew 2:23, Isaiah 11:1)
7. His coming will be foretold (St. Matthew 3:3, 11:10-14, St. Mark 1:2-3, St. Luke 3:4-6, 7:27, St. John 1:23, Isaiah 40:3-5 Malachi 3:1, 4:5).
8. Children will be massacred in Bethlehem (St. Matthew 2:18, Genesis 35:19-20, 48:7, Jeremiah 31:15).
9. His mission will be for the Gentiles (St. Matthew 12:18-21, Isaiah 42:1-4).
10. He will heal the sick (St. Matthew 8:17, Isaiah 53:4)
11. He will teach through parables (St. Matthew 13:14 ,15,35, Isaiah 6:9-10).
12. The rulers will not believe him and will cast him out (St. Matthew 15:8,9,21:42, St. Mark 7:6,7; 12:10,11, St. Luke 20:17, St. John 12:38-40; 15:25, Psalms 69:4, 118:22; Isaiah 6:10,29:13, 53:1).
13. He will enter Jerusalem in a triumphal procession St. Matthew 21:5, St. John 12:13-15, Isaiah 62:11, Zachariah 9:9; Psalms 118:26).
14. He will be betrayed by a friend and follower for thirty pieces of silver (St. Matthew 27:9-10, St. John 13:18, Zachariah 11:12-13, Psalms 41:9).

15. He will be reckoned among the transgressors (St. Luke 22:37, Isaiah 53:9, 12).
16. He will be offered vinegar to drink mingled with gall (St. Matthew 27:34, St. John 19:29, Psalms 69:21).
17. Lots will be cast for his clothes (St. John 19:24, Psalms 22:18).
18. Not a bone of his will be broken (St. John 19:36, Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, Psalms 34:20).
19. He will be pierced on his side with a spear (St. John 19:37, Numbers 12:10, Psalms 22:16).
20. A rich man will bury him (Isaiah 53:9, St. Matthew 27:57-60).
21. He will be raised from the dead on the third day (St. Matthew 12:40, St. Luke 24:46, Acts 2:25-32, 13:33-35, Psalms 16:10-11, Hosea 6:2, Jonah 1:7).

The early Christian believed and taught that the advent of the Messiah as prophesied in the Old Testament were thus fulfilled in Christ.

The Christian Church believes that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. The Church teaches that the concepts and hopes about the anointed that the Jews had entertained were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. These concepts and hopes are as follows:

1. The anointed means the one chosen for the fulfilment of God's plan (Exodus 30:23-25, I Samuel 24:6, 26:9).
2. The Messiah of whom the prophets have foretold will come as the king of Israel and will be the Son of David (St. Matthew 2:4-6; 22:43). His throne will be everlasting.
3. The King born in the house of David will make the people righteous and contented (Isaiah 9:6,7; 11:1, 10, 16:5, Jeremiah 23:5, 33:14, 15, 30:9, Ezekiel 34:23, 37:24).
4. He will be the servant (Zachariah 3:8) lord (Ezekiel 34:24), judge (Micah 5:2, Isaiah 55:4), shepherd (Micah 5:4, Isaiah 40:11) and high priest and king (Jeremiah 33:17, 18, Zachariah 6:12, 13).

5. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed through him and all flesh shall see it together (Isaiah 40:5).
6. He will on his own take the role of a servant (Isaiah 42:1, 49:3, Ezekiel 34:23, Zachariah 3:9).
7. His authority will extend to the ends of the earth (Psalms 2:8, 72:8, Micah 5:4, Zachariah 9:10).
8. The Gentiles will know him and subject themselves to him and become united with his kingdom (Amos 9:12, Heggai 2:7).
9. He is the one to establish peace on earth (Jeremiah 33:16, Zachariah 9:9.)
10. He will wash away the filth of the world (Isaiah 4: 3, 4, Jeremiah 23:6, Ezekiel 27:23)
11. He will be the judge and dispenser on the Day of Judgment (Isai. 2:4, 11:4. Daniel 7:12.)

16. The Ministry of Jesus

The Gospels contain a record of what the early Church knew and proclaimed about Jesus Christ. In addition to the Gospels, the catechetical instruction of the Church, its worship, its anti-heretical writings, its exhortations against the heathen cult, and the drawings on the walls of catacombs and similar media served to transmit details about Christ's life and teachings to the posterity.

All about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ are not known from the facts recorded in the Gospels. No one can claim that the translations from the Greek originals are perfect. The Church that worships Christ and imbibes Him through the Holy Qurbana and sacramental rites lives in Christ and bears witness to Him. It is this witness that should remain for ever as the dynamic tradition of the Church.

The fact that there are some scholars who split hairs about certain aspects of the Gospels and attempt a literal interpretation of them in a bid to demonstrate their scholarship is not, however ignored.

Jesus Christ on whom the Christian faith is founded is a historical personage. The leaders of the early Church as well as many of the devotees who had witnessed the life and ministry of Jesus Christ were competent enough to set right the false traditions about Christ. The New Testament, the witness of the Christian Church, the statements of heathen writers and the absence of proofs to the contrary, are enough to establish that Jesus Christ is a historical personage.

The Roman historian Suetonius (65-140 A. D.) in his book 'Life of Claudius' (XXV. 4) has stated that during the reign of Claudius (51 or 52 A. D.) the Christians were expelled from Rome consequent on their agitation at the instigation of Christ. In his 'Life of Nero', Suetonius contemptuously speaks about Christians as a group of people who had come to believe in a new kind of superstition, having become the followers of Christ. Though Suetonius had no respect for Christians, yet he was aware of the fact that a person called Christ had lived.

The Roman historian Tacitus (54-119 A. D.) speaks about the attempts of Emperor Nero to blame Christians for the havoc caused by the fire (Annals xv, 44). He writes about the origin of Christians thus: 'This name is derived from Christ who received death sentence from Pilate, one of our governors during the reign of Tiberius'.

Pliny, the Governor of Bithunia, who wrote a letter to Emperor Trajan in 112 A. D. stated, 'However hard we try, we cannot make a Christian curse the name of Christ.' He also wrote that Christians gathered together before dawn and sang hymns of praise to Christ as if they were praising God. He made these remarks describing the difficulties he had to face in his earnest attempts to destroy the Christian Superstition.

In addition to the evidence from Roman history, we come across references to Jesus in the works of Josephus, the Jewish

historian. These references also prove that Christ is a historical personage. In his book 'Antiquities' written in 93 A. D., Josephus (37-100 A.D.) has stated thus: 'Ananias convened the Sanhedrim of Judges and produced before them Jacob, the brother of Jesus who was called Christ.' The Jewish religious book 'Talmud' makes mention of Jesus Christ; this too shows that Jesus Christ belongs to history.

About the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, St. Paul writes: 'But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son' (Ga. 14:4). The political, cultural, moral and religious circumstances that prevailed in the Roman empire of the time also show that God was preparing the world for the Incarnation.

The main concern of the Gospels, which provide the basis for the study about Jesus Christ, is not the story of his life. The authors of the Gospels selected certain incidents from His life with a definite objective and recorded them. St. John explains this objective. 'These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name' (St. John 20:31.) All the Gospels, though written from different perspectives, view Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

The authors of the Gospels testify that Jesus belonged to the lineage of Abraham, father of the Israelites and of David, their King, and that He was born of a virgin. He had a very humble birth. But it was really a great event that delighted the angels and the archangels in heaven. They glorified God singing hymns in praise of Him. The Gospels deal with the visit of the shepherds, the eighth day ceremony of circumcision, the coming of the Magi, the reaction of Herod, Christ's childhood in Nazareth, His experiences in the temple of Jerusalem, His preparation for the ministry, His temptations and the mission of John the Baptist. The Gospels also describe the different phases of His ministry that lasted three years.

In the Gospel according to St. John seven incidents that determine the period of Christ's ministry are given. They are: the passover in April (St. John 2:13), the harvest in May (St. John

4:36) the Pentecost in June (St. John 5:1), the Passover in April (St. John 6:4) and the feast of Tabernacles in October (St. John 7:2), the feast of the Dedication in December (St. John 10:22) and the Passover in April (St. John 11:55). Thus the period of the ministry covered three passovers but did not exceed three years. This period can be divided into three stages: the year of His entry (spent mostly in Judea), the year of His fame (spent mostly in Galilee), and the year of opposition to Him (six months in Galilee and the next six months in Judea). He commenced His ministry when He was thirty years old (St. Luke 3:24).

The most important highlight of Christ's ministry was the selection and training of the Apostles. He gave them opportunities not only to listen to his public utterances and witness his miracles but also to hear Him in private and to know Him in His private life. He interpreted to them clearly the truths that he had spoken to the people through the parables. He shared with them the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. They had gone to Him with worldly aspirations, but he showed great patience in His dealings with them and tolerated their weaknesses. He transformed them into men of divine character and divine vision and made them the pillars of the Church that was the new Israel.

Miracles have an important place in the ministry of Jesus. Preaching, teaching and healing the sick formed part of His ministry. His miracles can be classified as miracles in relation to His personality (His Virgin Birth, Resurrection and Ascension), miracles in relation to nature (His acts of turning water into wine, allaying the fury of the sea, feeding 5000 with five loaves of bread, walking on the sea, etc. and miracles showing pity to the suffering souls (healing the sick and raising the dead etc.) 'Miracles are not contrary to nature, but contrary to what we know of nature'. These words of St. Augustine are significant. There are many who think that miracles and signs are essential in the Church even today. But this tendency to look for miracles cannot be regarded as a sign of spiritual growth and faith in God. Just as the law of the Lord is necessary for a child

to grow up in faith, miracles were helpful in the infancy of the Church. In this lies the relevance of miracles.

The horizon of Gospel truths is wide. These truths are enshrined in the parables that are 'natural stories conveying profound ideas'. the Sermon on the Mount expounding the new laws of the Kingdom of God (St. Matthew 5, 6, 7,) the teachings of Jesus Christ about God the Father and about Himself, the effects of sin, the meaning of redemption, the acts of the Holy Spirit, the nature and form of the Church, the meaning of transfiguration and life through death.

The culmination of Christ's ministry, witnessed His coming to Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple, the Last Supper, the Passion, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. All these incidents formed part of the eternal plan of God to reveal His unbounded love for mankind.

Jesus Christ is the Incarnate of God in history. He was born of a Virgin in the lineage of David by the act of the Holy Ghost. He was perfect man and perfect God. He experienced the sorrows and comforts of earthly life and lived without sin. He chose His disciples and entrusted them with a mission; He founded the Holy Church; underwent sufferings and courted crucifixion and accepted death. But through Resurrection, He defeated the forces of death.

He revealed the mysteries of the Kingdom of God and eternal life. He led the disciples chosen by Him to the experience of transfiguration on Mount Tabor as a sign of eternal life that knew no bounds of time and age. He proved man's capacity to become divine. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the universe who came to redeem all creatures, to sanctify them and to make them one with Him.

17. The Sources of Christology

We see three main sources in the New Testament for the interpretation of the personality of Jesus Christ.

1. Synoptic Christology.
2. Johannine Christology.
3. Pauline Christology.

The relevance of the above division is to be understood on the basis of the special terms and expressions used to refer to Jesus Christ.

'Christ', 'Son of Man', 'Son of God', 'Lord', the Word that was God; 'Creator', 'the Second Adam', 'Alpha and Omega', 'the Lamb of God' and 'Ebed Yahweh', are some of the names used in the New Testament to refer to Jesus Christ. What follows is not an analysis of each one of the above terms but an explanation of a few of the important and relevant ones.

Seventy times we come across the term Son of Man in the first three Gospels. The Lord uses the term 'the Son of Man' to refer to Himself. The Hebrew word 'Barnasha' (in Syriac Barnosho) means 'one who belongs to the human race'. In the Book of Ezekiel and in the Psalms this term is used either to mean 'man' or to suggest 'I'. But in Daniel 7:13, Job 35:8, Psalms 80:17, it is used against a different setting. In the apocryphal Books of Enoch and 2 Esdras, it is suggested that this superhuman Son of Man is the Messiah (Enoch 48:4, 62:13 ff, 37:71, 62:7 etc.) Prophet Daniel mentions that the one like the Son of Man was given everlasting Kingdom and dominion. And Enoch speaks about the Son of Man as one who is above nature and is revealed to the world from the clouds of heaven. Jesus Himself realised the above truth and regarded Himself as the representative of the people of God.

In the Synoptic Gospels there are five contexts in which Jesus Christ uses the term 'Son of Man':

- a) He uses it when He refers to his human nature (e.g. 'The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head'—St. Luke 9:58. St. Matthew 26:24.)
- b) He uses it when He reveals His superhuman nature, (e. g. 'The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins—St. Mark. 2:10.)
- c) He uses it when he talks about the establishment of the Kingdom of God, (e. g. 'The Son of Man goes out to sow good deeds'—St. Matt. 13:7)
- d) He uses it when he refers to Passion and Crucifixion, (e.g. 'The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of man that might kill him, and he will be raised on the third day'—St. Mattaw 17.22.)
- e) He uses it when he foretells events leading to the end of the world, (e. g. 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, there he will sit on his glorious throne.' —St. Matt. 25:31, 24:30 etc.)

The Greek term 'Kurios' means 'the mighty' 'the powerful' and 'the lord of slaves'. However, the term 'Adonijah' (Adonai) is used in the Old Testament to describe Jehovah and His kingship. Christians accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord and God. And many became martyrs for accepting Jesus Christ as the Lord instead of Caesar. The Kingdom, glory and power belong to the Lord. This was why the early Christians used this term to proclaim their faith in Unity in Trinity, the glory of God and the kingship and Godship of Christ (see St. Mark 2:28, St. Luke 2:11, 1 Cor, 12:4—6, 11:26, 2 Cor, 3:17, St. John 6:68, 1 Cor. 16:22, St. Mark 12:36, St. Matthew 28:18, Acts. 2:34, Philippians 2:11 etc.) That Jesus Christ is the Lord (Rom. 10:9) was in fact the only creed of the early Christians.

During the period of the Old Testament servants were equated with slaves. Their masters could buy or sell them at will. The Jewish masters used to give the servants some positions or privileges in their houses (e. g. Eliezer in the house of Abraham in Genesis 15:2). The subjects of the King, especially the captives of war, were the servants of the king (2. Sam. 8:6, 1 King 20:23). A slave had the natural right to freedom at the end of

seven years (i. e. a sabbatical year). Otherwise, he had the right to freedom only if he paid off his debts.

In the Roman empire slaves had no rights. The Essenes were against the practice of keeping slaves in the houses. Christians are the servants of Christ. They have, therefore, no lord other than Christ.

In the Old Testament, 'the servant of the Lord' means the person who has been chosen by the Lord and who has worked with Him (Genesis 26:24, Exodus 32:13, Deuteronomy 9:23). Moses, Joshua, David, the prophets, Zerubbabel and Nebuchadnezzar have also been called by this title. This term has been applied to the Shepherd king who is to appear in the house of David (Exodus 34:23-24; 37:25). In Isaiah, there is a reference to the suffering servant (Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13, 53:12), the Kingdom of Israel in general (Isaiah 41:8-9) and the faithful Israelites in particular (Isaiah 54:17).

The apocryphal Books of Enoch, Ezra and Baruch also make mention of the servant of the Lord. The 'teacher of righteousness' mentioned in the Qumran Scrolls has resemblance to the servant of the Lord.

In Isaiah, this servant is one who suffers and re-establishes the covenant. Jesus Christ is the servant of the Lord who suffered in order to re-establish the privileged position of man that was lost by sin, and to reconcile him with God. The ministering Son of Man in Mark 10:45 refers to Isaiah 53. St. Paul also speaks about Jesus as the suffering servant. The similarity between the suffering servant of the Lord and Jesus is evident in the New Testament.

The Jews never used 'the Son of God' as a synonym of 'the Messiah'. But Israel in general and their king in particular were accustomed to be called 'the Son of God' (Exodus 4:22, 2 Sam 7:14). In the New Testament 'the Son of God' (St. Matthew 16:16) is a synonym of Christ. Its meaning is revealed in the divine proclamation 'This is my beloved Son' (St. Matthew 3:17) as well as in the phrase 'the only begotten Son' (St. John 3:16). The glory and status of the Son of God are described

in St. Luke 8:28, Rom. 1:5, Galatians 2:20, Colos. 1:13 etc. The sonship of Jesus Christ is everlasting. He is the only begotten Son of God. It is through Him that mankind receives sonship.

That word became flesh is stressed by St. John more than the Incarnation of God as man. The Gospel according to St. John has some special features both in its form and content. St. John speaks emphatically of the historical relevance of the life of Jesus Christ. He asserts the Godship of Christ.

The Christological significance of this Gospel consists in its sevenfold 'I am' passage.

I am the bread of life. (6:35)

I am the light of the world. (8:12)

I am the door. (10:9)

I am the good shepherd. (10:11)

I am the resurrection and life. (11:25)

I am the way, the truth and the life. (14:6)

I am the true vine and my Father is the Vinedresser. (15:1)

St. John uses the term 'Logos' to make it clear that Jesus Christ has been God before and after the Incarnation. He brings out the importance and relevance of logos on six occasions [St. John 1:1 (3 times), 1:14, 1 John 1:1 Revelations 19:13].

St. John witness that all creation is through Christ and that without Him there is no life, light, truth or salvation. In his view Logos is the personal revelation of God for the salvation and judgement of mankind.

The Greek and Jewish philosophies view Logos only as an intermediary between the Creator and the created or as the power that emanates from God. On the other hand, St. John declares, 'In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God', and affirms the faith in the triune Godhead. It is because St. John boldly proclaims the 'theosness' of Logos that he becomes worthy of being called a theologian.

Among the Christological pronouncements of St. Paul, two are significant. In the Epistle to Philippians (2:6-8) he writes:

Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of man'. In other words, leaving His position of equality and likeness of God, He humbled himself to accept the form of a servant.

Before the Incarnation, Jesus Christ had everlasting pre-existence. This existence was prior to that of all creation and beyond all limits of time and space. Logos, the second person in the Trinity, was all perfect and everlasting. But by His self-emptying (Kenosis), He became subject to the limits of time and space and became 'the Incarnate'. Such self-sacrifice must become part of every believer's life (Colossians 1:15–20).

Christ's connection with the universe (cosmos) is witnessed by St. Paul. He assures us of remission of sins, reconciliation and redemption through the Son. 'He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible, and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together'.... 'For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his Cross' (Colossians 1:15–20).

In opposition to gnosticism, which explains the intervening powers and dominions between God and the universe, St. Paul witnesses that Christ is the only intermediary and redeemer. Christ is the Heavenly Cosmic Man. 'For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of His Will, according to His purpose which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to make all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth' (Ephesians 1:9f).

Scholars in general hold the view that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by St. Paul. Whatever it be, the author of this epistle views Christ as the everlasting High Priest, '....He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called

may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant' (Hebrews 9:15). Christ intercedes for us. Thus the Son became Man in order to redeem man. He is the everlasting High Priest interceding between God and man. By this sacrifice on the cross He fulfilled the sacraments and priesthood of the Old Testament. By His own authority He opened for mankind the door to heaven.

The Old Testament required animals and priests for sacrifices. In the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who is the eternal mediator. He Himself became both the animal and the priest.

18. Redemption through the Cross

There are different interpretations about Crucifixion. St. Paul says that Crucifixion resulted in the remission of sins (Romans 6:10), peace (Col. 1:20) and reconciliation (Ephesians 2:13-17). St. John describes the Crucifixion of the Lord as the redeeming sacrifice for mankind, using expressions such as 'the lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world' (Revelation 13:8) and the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' (St. John 1:29).

The Holy Bible witnesses that during the days of the ministry of Jesus Christ as the Incarnate, He was 'one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin' (Hebrews 4:15, 2 Cor. 5:21) and that His death was inevitable. By His death, the redemption of mankind became possible.

What was the condition from which mankind was redeemed? What price did God have to pay for it? To whom did he pay the ransom? What is the connection between the disobedience of the First Adam and the obedience of Christ, the Second Adam? Is it not just and right that sin is punished? Was it to

please God, the Father that Son, the God underwent Crucifixion? Did Christ die on the cross to arouse in mankind a feeling of repentance? Did Jesus Christ by His death take upon Himself the inevitable punishment of sin? Was the sacrifice on the cross an imperative to bring together God and man?

The Christian thinkers who asked these questions and tried to find answers to them formulated different theories. We have, however, to bear in mind the limitations of the human mind and those of man-made definitions when we examine these theories, having regard to the complexity of the mysterious redemptive plan of God.

Thinkers like Origen believed that the sin of Adam brought mankind into the slavery of the devil and that by His suffering and death Christ paid the ransom to the devil and redeemed the descendants of Adam. In the Holy Bible it is recorded that He gave His life as a ransom for many. (St. Mark. 10:45, I Timothy 2:6). But it is not mentioned that the ransom was paid to the devil, nor should we think so. What is important is to accept the truth that Christ redeemed man from slavery and sin. It is irrelevant to ask whom was the ransom paid to and whether it was paid to God or to the devil or to someone else. Origen's theory is called 'the Ransom Theory'.

Irenaeus, a renowned Church father, reveals through his letters that Christ, the Second Adam, passed through all stages in the life of a sinner. He contained in Himself all the descendants of the First Adam and recapitulated them in Himself and then redeemed all of them. He also fulfilled in Himself all the former divine revelations,

Irenaeus teaches that redemption is the process of bringing together all creation to Christ, who is the head. (Anakephalaiosis or recapitulation) and of uniting things in heaven and things on earth', in Christ (Eph. 1:10). 'He (Christ) has put all things under His feet and has made Him the head over all things for the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all' (Ephesians 1:22, 23). 'For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience, many will be

made righteous' (Rom. 3:19). Irenaeus has based his views on these assertions of St. Paul. His theory is called 'the Recapitulation Theory.'

Anselm (1033-1109), the learned Archbishop of Canterbury in his work 'Cur Deus Homo?' has given a strange interpretation to 'redemption through Crucifixion'.

As man has limitations, he cannot give everlasting satisfaction. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, alone can give everlasting satisfaction. It was not for His sins that the sinless Jesus died. By this great act of obedience, the Holy Son satisfied God, the Father and gave mankind the great reward he received for His obedience. This was how the entire mankind was redeemed.

The above idea presented by Anselm has come to be known as 'the Satisfaction Theory'. Here he stresses the justice of God. The opponents of this theory ask whether it is enough that Christ, instead of mankind, satisfied God. They also ask if it is logical that God became man and satisfied Himself.

Peter Abelard (1079-1142) argues that Jesus Christ, through Crucifixion revealed God's love in order that the sinners might repent and change their hearts. He asserts that Crucifixion was neither to satisfy God nor to give ransom to the devil. This theory points to the depth of God's love and the need for repentance on the part of sinners. Hence this theory is called 'the Moral Influence Theory.' This is an imperfect theory since it does not include all aspects of Crucifixion.

Leaders of Reformation like Martin Luther have stated that Jesus Christ voluntarily accepted the inevitable wages of sin. God's sense of justice cannot but punish sin. The love of God will not let the sinner suffer. So the only alternative was for the Son of Man to undergo punishment voluntarily. They also teach that Christ wilfully accepted punishment to become one with the sinner. This theory has come to be called 'the Penal Theory'. Critics ask whether justice is done when an innocent person is punished, even though he takes upon himself the punishment voluntarily,

In his work 'The Incarnation of the Word' (De Incarnatione Verbi) St. Athanasius (4th century) has dealt in some detail with the mysteries of redemption. He views the Incarnation and Crucifixion of our Lord as a solution to a divine dilemma. The dilemma consists in the question whether the sinner should go scot-free without justice being dispensed or whether he should be punished and made to perish.

God's love does not allow man to perish. God's sense of justice will not, at the same time, let the sinner go unpunished. So, combining in Himself justice and love, God became man and suffered Crucifixion. He became flesh without sin and was born of a virgin. By Resurrection, He triumphed over death. (2 Cor. 5:14 Hebrews 2:9-14.) The Creator alone can become the redeemer.

Through His incarnation, Jesus revealed the nature of God. The Old Testament witnesses that God's nature was revealed through nature, the laws and the saints. But that was not enough.

St. Athanasius writes thus: 'By His life on earth, He sanctified the earth. By lying on the cross in the air, He sanctified the atmosphere and filled the hades. In order that the sons of man may become sons of God, the Son of God became the Son of Man.'

St. Athanasius points out that redemption and revelation are the ends of the Incarnation. He further states that the personality and activities of Christ are inextricably bound up with one another. He views the Incarnation as the consummation of a sacrifice.

The Fathers of the Eastern Church shared the view of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews that the Crucifixion of our Lord was a sacrifice of redemption and remission of sins. They view the Holy Qurbana not as repetition but as an extension of this sacrifice. As described in the Old Testament sacrifice is an offering, a thanksgiving, a means of remission of sins and a sign of the covenant. The sacrificial offering is sanctified and eaten. It is with awe and reverence that offerings are

made to God. Prayers are said for the remission of sins, and for sanctification. Also, the believer who makes the sacrificial offering partakes of the feast that follows. Though the object of sacrifice loses its life, the believer gains life. In the Old Testament, blood is thus the symbol of life.

The blood of Jesus Christ is the blood of redemption of the new covenant. No remission of sins is possible without that blood being sprinkled. No life is possible for the believer without partaking of that flesh and blood. It means that life is not possible for the believer without taking part in the sacrifice called the Holy Qurbana. Through this sacrifice, the communion between God and man is realized. The verse 'The blood of Christ washes away all sins and cleanses us' may be understood in this sense.

Through baptism every believer shares the experience of being made divine and of becoming a son of God. If man's growth in the likeness and image of God in Paradise became stunted as a result of his sin, he has again been called into the experience of constant growth in the likeness and image of God. By baptism, we are born again, and steadily grow so as to attain the greatest possible likeness of God. This spiritual growth continues beyond this life. That is why the Church lays emphasis on life after death. Man can never attain perfection and be like God. But he can realise the virtues that are attributed to God. By redemption he regains this opportunity to attain the likeness of God or the process of becoming divine. If on God's part becoming the Son of Man or the Incarnation is the main aspect of redemption, on man's part, the process of becoming the son of God or deification is the fundamental fact of redemption. The redemption of mankind is not the responsibility of God alone. Man has his own share in the act of redemption. It is our duty to endeavour constantly to become sons of God. This endeavour is an indispensable aspect of redemption, and is known as deification, 'becoming God-like!' Thus the Incarnation of God and the deification of man are two basic aspects of redemption.

19. The Resurrected Jesus

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of Christian faith. 'If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain' (1 Cor. 15:14). The empty sepulchre and the testimony of those who saw Jesus after the Resurrection prove that it is a historical fact.

The disciples at first refused to believe that Jesus had resurrected (St. Matthew 28:17, St. Luke 24:11—37, St. Mark 16:11-14, St. John 20:25). The death of Jesus had made them totally desperate. The Gospels reveal that Jesus had earlier told his disciples about his Resurrection (St. Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:32-34, St. Matt. 16:21, 17:9, 20:17, St. Luke 9:22, 18:33). But they did not understand the full import of it (St. Luke 24:13—35, St. John 20:26—29).

The early Christians firmly believed in the everlasting life of the resurrected Jesus. The witness of St. Paul may be taken as an example. He declares 'that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve' and 'then....to more than five hundred brethren at one time' (1 Corinthians 15:3—15). Though some of these five hundred brethren were dead at the time when the epistle was written, there lived some who actually witnessed the great event. He also appeared to St. Paul and his disciples and proved that He was alive. The early Christians tried to have a better understanding of the personality and acts of Christ in the light of His Resurrection.

There are some critics who argue that the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ were not true to facts. They do not hesitate to adduce proofs from the Bible itself. Let us examine some of their arguments.

When some of the Scribes and Pharisees asked him for a sign he answered them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks

for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and nights in the heart of the earth.' Jesus makes it clear that the sign of Jonah was applicable in His case too. Even as Jonah entered the belly of the whale and came out of it alive, Christ also came out of the sepulchre alive.

In St. Matt. 26:39, St. Luke 22:42 and St. Mark 14:36, we see the prayer 'My Father, If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' In st. Matt. 27:47, we see the question, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Some people refer to these two contexts and argue that the Father heard the prayer of Jesus and saved Him from death.

The two thieves who were also crucified along with Jesus were not dead when they were lowered from the cross. So, it is argued that Jesus also might have been alive at that time. Even the soldiers suspected that Jesus was alive. That was why Pilate asked Joseph of Arimathea whether Jesus died so soon.

A soldier pierced His side and at once there came out blood and water. This incident has made some think that Jesus was alive at that time. They argue that He was lowered from the cross and attended to properly. Thus he was saved from death. The fact that His legs were not broken also gives rise to some doubts.

As desired by his wife, Pilate wanted to release Jesus. It is therefore argued that it is possible that Pilate must have continued the effort with the help of Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodimus and others and then managed to hide Him alive after removing Him from the sepulchre. Those who support this view further argue that after the Resurrection when Jesus appeared in flesh and blood, he was hungry and thirsty.

Many theories have been put forward about the disappearance of Christ's body. It has been said that the disciples stole the body of Jesus and that those who claimed to have seen the resurrected body were subject to hallucinations; their claim to have seen the body was just a fantasy. Yet another theory was that it was the soul alone that had resurrected.

The theories mentioned above are not forceful enough to refute the strong witness of the early Church and what is recorded in the Holy Bible. The Jewish leaders had tried to prove that Jesus had not resurrected. But they could not convince the people that the Resurrection did not take place. They could not disprove the statement of St. Paul that Jesus had appeared to more than five hundred people. (Many of them might have been alive at that time.)

Jesus gave the sign of the prophet Jonah, not to mean that He would remain alive in the sepulchre and come out after three days. What he meant was that he would be buried after death, but would resurrect on the third day. It must be remembered that the Jews had prevailed upon Pilate to get the sepulchre sealed and to send soldiers to guard the sepulchre.

If anyone wanted to steal the body of Jesus, he could very well do it without removing the linen cloth that covered the body. The disciples were convinced that the linen cloth was not handled by a thief. It may reasonably be assumed that the person who could get out of the sepulchre could as well come out of the linen covering without loosening it.

It is foolish to think that it was out of fear that Jesus prayed, 'if it be possible, let this cup pass from me'. If we examine the seven utterances made by Jesus from the cross, we will realise His greatness. While on the cross, it was not His own agony that worried Him. He wanted to save His fellow sufferers. He felt that the Father rejected Him, but it was only a momentary feeling of rejection brought about by the weight of the sins of mankind imposed on the sinless Jesus. However, He thereby became one with mankind. About this a saint has remarked, 'In order that we may be one with God for ever, Christ was forsaken for a moment'.

It is also wrong to think that Jesus was still alive when He was lowered from the cross. They made doubly sure that Jesus was dead (St. John 19:34). The enraged Jews and the Roman authorities would not have allowed Him to be buried without having made sure that He was dead. The soldier who pierced

Him on His side saw blood and water coming out. He would naturally have ascertained whether He had died on the cross.

The miraculous transformation of the disciples is a positive proof of the fact of Resurrection. We may reasonably ask whether fabricated stories could bring about such a transformation. Jesus appeared to different groups on different occasions. It is not reasonable to think that all of them were mentally deranged to experience hallucinations. The basic fact behind the growth and spread of the Christian Church is the truthfulness of the Resurrection. It is a myth spread by the Pharisees that the disciples had stolen the body. St. Matt. 27:64; and 28:13 make these facts clear.

The Holy Church believes in and reiterates the truth of the Resurrection. He defeated evil and death, Satan and his army. The disciples always felt the presence of the resurrected Jesus with them. The Church and the world of today should also have the same experience. His was the Resurrection of the whole person; since body and soul are inseparable, there is no possibility of Christ's soul resurrecting separately from His body. The Resurrection also disproves the Greek view that matter is evil.

The Church witnesses that Passion goes before Resurrection, that faith in the resurrected Christ is an assurance of the Resurrection of the individual and that it marks the fulfilment of the Christian hope. The Resurrection proves that God, as Trinity, is beyond time and space and is everlasting.

A scholar explains the meaning of the Resurrection thus: 'The Resurrection of Christ is the symbol of a mission that is to be fulfilled. It is the symbol of a great victory and the guarantee of the Resurrection in the future, and the assurance of the last judgment.'

The Second Coming of our Lord is also one of the most important doctrines of the Church (Acts 1:10, 11). At the time of Ascension, two men in white robes declared, 'This Jesus who was taken up from you into Heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into Heaven'. The Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost may be considered the beginning

of the last age inaugurated by the Messiah and the Second Coming may be looked upon as the close of that age. We do not know the day and hour of the Second Coming. What is significant is not the time of coming, but the fact of the Second Coming. The end is vividly described in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel according St. Mark and in the second chapter of 2. Thessalonians.

Though words used by contemporary Jews to express their hope in the coming of Christ have been employed in these contexts, yet the Christian scholars argue that the message of the Second Coming in the New Testament is part of the Christian promise (Acts 10:42, 2 Timothy 4:1).

'The resurrected Jesus will come again to be the Judge of the living and the dead.' The meaning of the Resurrection and the Judgment is beyond human comprehension. It is our version that God's love, justice and mercy become evident in the Resurrection and will again become evident in the Last Judgment. The Christian duty is to approach these mysteries with faith and hope.

20. The Christological Encounter

Many Christological interpretations have been rejected by the Church because they do not agree with the common traditions of the Church. (It may be noted that scholars disagree as to the criterion to be applied to these traditions.) The early Church could not fully appreciate and understand the personality and mission of Jesus Christ; available records were unhelpful. This was the reason for the many interpretations that came into existence. Conflicting opinions, groupisms and Christological arguments split the Church.

The Christology of the Church developed, in course of time through a process of confronting the views that were only

partially true and therefore harmful. These views rejected by the Church as immature are examined below.

In the very first century, there was an attempt to interpret the personality of Jesus Christ from within the framework of Gnosticism. However, among the Gnostics themselves there were differences of opinion. But by and large they put forward the argument that there were two distinct Gods or realities. One was God, the creator of goodness and the other was God, the creator of evil. The material world was created by the God of evil and hence it was evil. But men, who had their souls created by the creator of goodness, were also in this world. They were however, ignorant of their nature and lived in darkness. It was to give them gnosis or real knowledge that God sent Jesus Christ to this world.

The Gnostics did not believe in the perfection of Jesus Christ as man and as God. According to them, Jesus was only an intermediary. The knowledge about Jesus and the material world alone was important. They claimed that they possessed this knowledge. They rejected the concepts of salvation and redemption offered by Jesus and did not give much importance to His Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection. Basilidus, Valentinus and Ptolemy of the second century were some of the leading Gnostics.

Ebionism had its origin in the second century. The Ebionists denied the Godship of Jesus and His Virgin birth. They thought that it was irrational to believe that Jesus who suffered passion was God. Ebion propounded this theory and there were others who followed him.

Docetism may be explained as the theory of illusion. It says that the human nature of Jesus and the Passion connected with it are mere illusions. Body and soul are separate. Matter is evil, and it is not rational to think that God can take the form of matter.

Marcion of the second century viewed the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament as two distinct entities. He rejected Christ's Resurrection and did not accept certain passage in the New Testament on the Godship of Jesus.

Sabellius of the third century is the originator of the theory of Sabellianism. The theory is also called modellistic monarchianism. God is single and has one personality. This single personality became manifest in the old Testament as the Father, and as the Son in Jesus Christ and as the Holy Ghost in the Church. This single everlasting personality of God thus revealed itself in three periods in three different modes. The terms 'the Father', 'the Son' and 'the Holy Ghost' suggest these three modes. Sabellianism which denied the Trinity, the reality of the Incarnation and the eternity of God, the Son, was strongly opposed by the leaders of the Church of the 3rd and 4th centuries.

Theodotus who lived in the latter half of the second century taught that Jesus was accorded Godship at the time of His baptism and was thus adopted by God. He also taught that Jesus lost His Godship when He was crucified. The theory, which is also called 'Dynamic Monarchianism' thus questioned the everlasting Godship of Christ.

Arianism began with Arius who died in 336 A. D. With his name were associated the names of Paul of Samosota who was called Arius before Arius, Aetius and Eunomius. Paul of Samosota believed that Jesus Christ who was conceived by Virgin Mary and was born of her was not the Word of God but a mere man and that the Word was not called the Son before the Word became flesh in Jesus Christ. In effect this view rejected the Trinity and emphasised the human nature also of God, the Son. In the 3rd and 5th centuries, Aetius and Eunomius gave this theory a philosophical basis.

The doctrine of Arius may be summed up as follows: 'God, the Father alone is unborn, everlasting and uncreated. God, the Son is a perfect creation before every other creation. There was a time when there was no Son. St. John 14:28, Col. 1:15 may be quoted in support of this view'. The Council of Nicea in 325 A. D. condemned Arius as a heretic for propounding the above belief.

According to Arius, Jesus was created in such a condition as to become liable to sin, and it was only by the grace of God that He could live without sin.

Eutychanism is the theory of single nature. Eutychus who propounded the theory denied the human nature of Christ. However, there are some scholars who think that this is a misinterpretation of what Eutychus really put forward as his theory.

Nestorianism is the double nature theory. According to this theory, Christ had two distinct natures, the divine and the human, and the personality of Christ consisted in the meeting of these two natures in His person. (Nestorius who propounded this theory was later appointed Bishop of Constantinople in 428.).

Apollinarius attempted to answer the question how there could emerge a personality in the union of the Word that was God and man. He accepted the psychological explanation of the existence of the body, the living soul and the conscious mind in a person and explained that when the everlasting Word became incarnate in man, God took for Himself only human body and human soul and not the conscious mind, and put Word that became God in the place of the conscious mind. This was how Apollinarius emphasised the unity of the personality of Jesus Christ. But he was vague about the perfection of Christ's human nature.

From time to time many Fathers of the Church, and many Councils too have not only rejected the above theories about the personality of Christ but have also given us valuable insights. Even while admitting that the mystery of the Incarnation cannot be brought within the confines of theories, they have tried to explain the secret of this great mystery. They have repeatedly asserted that Jesus is complete man and complete God and that He has a hypostatically united personality.

We do not say that the insights given by these Fathers of the Church are either perfect or free from ideas that go against the scriptures. These insights and interpretations are given below.

According to Clement of Rome, (d. 101) Christ is the sceptre of the glory of God. He is our high priest and protector. His death is the greatest instance of humility. He shed His blood for the whole world and gave us the grace of repentance.

The Epistle of Barnabas (2nd cent.) belongs to the time of the Apostles, but very little is known about its author. It says that Christian life is a continuous conflict with evil (the Black One), and that Christ came to redeem us from the darkness of our hearts and to lead us to the eternal light.

Not much is known about the writer of the shepherd of Hermas (2nd cent.). What he says in brief is: do good and attain glory. The everlasting spirit of God became incarnate in human body. The body did not yield to evil. God gave the body (i. e. Jesus) the right to share the glory of God, along with the Holy Ghost. (The idea is not fully clear.)

Not much is known about the author of the Epistle to Diognetus (2nd cent.) epistle. What the epistle says in effect is: Christ keeps the harmony of the universe; he is the only begotten Son of God; Christ is the Lord and Creator; He existed from the beginning.

According to Ignatius of Antioch, Jesus Christ is God. He is the Word that became flesh and, therefore, He is God and man. He is one single person. He is not a mere prophet. His Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection are all historical incidents. His Godship is not an illusion. He is the only physician of the body and the soul. His blood is the blood of God. His Passion is 'the Passion of my God'. The bread of the Eucharist that He established is the medicine of immortality and an antidote to keep us alive for ever in Jesus Christ. This Ignatius who had been thrown before the wild animals in the amphitheatre of Rome during the days of Emperor Trajan (98-117) was the Bishop of Antioch. His views were expressed in the many letters that he wrote to his friends and followers on his way from Antioch to Rome.

Apologists like Justin Martyr (6-110) analysed the doctrine of 'Logos' (Word) and found that the personality and working of the Word had their source in Greek philosophy. Justin argued that the repetition of the thoughts of Moses and the implications of the cross of Christ could be found in the pronouncements of Plato. But he also expressed his belief in God and regarded the

will of God, the Creator, and the will of Jesus Christ as the Same. All the same he gave Christ only the second place in the Trinity.

Irenaeus (140–200) maintains that knowledge, as envisaged by the Gnostics, is not the significant thing. What is significant is redemption through faith in Christ. Christ is God. He was born of Father in an inexplicable way and is the Son of God. God, the Son is the Logos (the Word) of God, the Father. By the act of the Holy Ghost, the Word took birth from Virgin Mary and became God the Son in the fulness of time, in order that man may be united with God. His deeds were real. When He voluntarily brought Himself to our state of being, He revealed His boundless love. He came as the Second Adam and went through every facet of life that the First Adam had unsuccessfully passed through, and redeemed that life. He is the creator of all, the saviour of all and He brings every thing together. By His death on the cross He killed death, revealed life and truth and gave immortality as the gift of redemption.

According to Tertullian, (160–240) Jesus Christ is not a mere man on whom the power of God has descended. Nor was He adopted to Godship. The Son was there before creation. The persons in the Trinity are of the same substance. Christ is the Incarnation of the Word, the God. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are God. Three persons of the same substance are revealed in the Trinity.

Clement of Alexandria (150–215) holds the view that all revelations come through the eternal Word. We do not know what God is. But we know what He is not. Through the Incarnation He made clear His perfect manship and perfect Godship. The explanations given by the Holy Fathers about the perfection of the manship and Godship of Jesus Christ need not be taken to be the final and complete assessment of the mysteries associated with the Incarnation.

According to Origen of Alexandria (d. 254), the union of the Godship and manship of Jesus was perfect. In a red hot iron, both iron and heat exist. Though both are distinct, one cannot

be distinguished from the other. The Godship and manship that were united in Jesus Christ cannot be separated from each other. But, like the Word that became God, His manship also expresses itself in His personality. By the union of Godship and manship neither of these personalities becomes extinct. Origen declares that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are three separate personalities that have neither beginning nor end. At the same time, he points out that while the Son and the Holy Ghost are subordinate to the Father, the Father is not subordinate to either. The Christological arguments in the history of the Church prove that to emphasise one of these aspects of Godhead at the expense of the others is an immature approach.

The Council of Nicea (325) declared that those who taught the following were hateful and damned and were alien to the Church.

There was a time when the Son was non-existent.

Logos (the Word) was created.

Logos is subject to change.

Logos is not of the same substance-as the Father.

Logos came into existence out of nothing (ex-nihilo).

The Council declared that the Father was without a beginning and an end; the everlasting only Son of God descended from heaven through the Holy Ghost and became man through Virgin Mary. In order that the world may attain everlasting redemption and salvation, He underwent Passion, suffered death, was resurrected on the third day, and ascended into heaven. The council also proclaimed that Christ would come again.

According to Athanasius of Alexandria (d. 373), Jesus Christ's manship is perfect; it is one attained by the Word becoming God. His Godship also is perfect. He is united to the Father in the same substance (homo ousion to patri) as the Father's. He was not a servant. But he took the role of a servant. Christ is the first born and is the perfect image of God. There never was a time without the Son. The Word became flesh in Christ, but Christ remained sinless.

The Cappadocian Fathers—St. Basil, St. Gregory of Naziansus and St. Gregory of Nyssa—made substantial contributions to the Christian conception of Trinity and the mystery of the Incarnation. Their contributions became the authoritative pronouncements of the Eastern Church. When Tertullian described God as 'oneness' and 'three persons' (*Una substantia et tres personae*) these fathers declared God to be one 'ousia' and three hypostases (*mia ousia kai treis hypostaseis*). The term 'ousia' was used to mean Godship. The term 'hypostases' denotes the distinct persons in the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. It was these Cappadocean Fathers, who led the Synod of Constantinople that re-affirmed the creed of Nicea in 381 against Arius.

The Christological thoughts that developed in the East from the middle of the second century under the guidance of the Alexandrian theologians tried to emphasise simultaneously the divinity and humanity of the Incarnated Word. The union of the two natures in Christ was personal and internal (hypostatic union). Jesus Christ was thus the Incarnate of the Word that became God (i. e. one incarnate nature of God the Word). They also pointed out that the phrase 'one Christ in two natures' was misleading.

The theological school that developed in the East with Antioch as the centre insisted that the union of the two natures in Christ was only outwardly personal (prosopic union) and that even after the union the two natures continued to exist separately in Christ. They maintain that internal, personal union between God's nature and man's nature was impossible.

It was as a result of the conflicting positions of these two schools that the Christological views of the Eastern Church developed. The Western Church of the times did not throw up intellectuals who could probe deep into such questions and discuss them. The council of Ephesus in 431, presided over by Cyril of Alexandria, may be regarded as the victory of the Alexandrian school, and the Council of Chalcedon in 451 as the triumph of the Antiochean school.

We may reasonably hope that a common Christology and perfect communion of the Churches may be arrived at in the near

future as a result of the theological dialogues conducted between the oriental Orthodox Churches (Armenian, Ethiopian, Syrian and Indian Orthodox Churches) that do not accept the decisions of the council of Chalcedon on the one hand and the Eastern Orthodox Churches (Greek, Russian, Georgian etc.) that accept the Chalcedon Council and the Roman Catholic Church on the other hand. These dialogues may dispel all misunderstandings and ideological confusions among these Churches.

The greater Orthodox Churches, that accept the Chalcedon tradition and the Roman Catholic Church hold fast to the phrase 'one Christ in two natures' and the Oriental Orthodox Churches insist on the phrase 'out of two natures'. Many scholars hope that the differences between the two views can be solved in the light of the proclamation of St. Cyril of Alexandria about the 'one incarnate nature of God, the Word'.

21. Holy Spirit, The Agent of Theosis

'Become renewed in the Spirit of your very being and get dressed with the new self created to be like God in true righteousness, and holiness' (Eph. 4:23-24) Here 'nous' or being is much more than soul or mind or some aspect of the human psychic system. It is rather the centre of our existence as person. It is the very essence of being, penetrating the whole psychosomatic being. This has to be renewed, changed and to be put on to a completely new basis in the Holy Spirit. The realization of this new life is a discovery which transforms life. It is the discovery of Truth. This process transforms man according to his original shape which always has been but is covered by sin.

The new self (kainos anthropos) described in the above passage is created like God. It is not God Himself. There is ontological sameness but personal difference. We are becoming

like God through this process otherwise called Theosis or divinization. (sharing in the life and glory of God). The Trinitarian God who created life, redeems in Christ and transforms into the new being in the Holy Spirit. In the writings of the Church Fathers like St Gregory of Nyssa (d. 398 A. D.) and St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444 A. D.), the final end of human beings is neither the knowledge of God nor a 'beatific vision' of God but 'metousia', participation in the divine life. This is the same as Taboric Transfiguration being transformed inwardly into the image of God.

St. Basil teaches that the Holy Spirit who deifies human beings must Himself be Divine (de Sancto Spirito:23). The expression Theon Genesthai (to become God) is used by St. Basil to explain this process of sanctification and deification.

St. Athanasius puts it as follows: God became man that we might become divine (de Incarnatione verbi: 54) St. Paul describes this process to the Corinthians. 'And we all, with unveiled face, reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit'. (2 Cor. 3:18). In his commentary on St. John, St. Cyril of Alexandria says that we are deified by the Holy Spirit who makes us likenesses of the Son, the perfect image of the Father (P. G. 74:541). It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that makes Theosis possible. Christ shining in us by the Holy Spirit is the basis of our glorification and sanctification. It is the Holy Spirit who is the agent in all the process justification, sanctification and glorification. All these three processes are simultaneous. The glory of God which we intuit in Christ is imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. We are united in Christ to the glory of the Holy Trinity by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit revived and strengthened the early Church so that it could boldly witness Jesus, survive persecutions and preach the gospel to the people speaking different languages. (Acts. 1:8, 4:33, 5:32, 6:5), In every stage of growth of the Church, the Holy Spirit guides it and inspires it (Acts 2:4, 4:8, 6:3, 8:15, 13:2, 16:6-7 etc.) In general, the Acts of the Apostles

shows that the presence and working of Jesus Christ were experienced by the early Church through the Holy Spirit. The acts of the Holy Spirit were an extension of the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Church knew intimately Jesus Christ who through the Holy Spirit, led it, encouraged it, guided it, reproved it, and appointed it for special ministry, besides carrying out His mission of healing and teaching.

The terms in Christ, in Spirit, the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit are used by St. Paul in identical contexts. According to Pauline view, a believer becomes one with Christ and the Holy Spirit at the same time. The life in the Spirit or the new life is attained through baptism. By the working of the Holy Spirit through baptism, the old man becomes dead and the new man resurrects. (Rom 6:11, 8:10-11, Gal 3:27). St. Paul speaks three times about the seal of the Spirit. (2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5, Eph. 1:14). The term 'arrabon' denotes advance payment in trade. The gift of the Spirit is the advance payment in the first stage of the eternal bliss that God is prepared to give those who love Him, and thus leads them to a complete transformation of their human nature.

Access to God becomes possible through the Holy Spirit. (Eph 2:18). The Greek term 'prosagony' is used in this context. It is used to mean that the Holy Spirit introduces us to God. The Spirit opens the door and ushers us into the presence of God. The Spirit lives in us and makes us worthy of calling God 'Abba' (Father) and of calling Jesus the Lord and of dealing with the Heavenly Father as His Sons. (Gal. 4:5-6, 1 Cor. 12:3, Rom, 8:15). The Spirit guides us to grow into the perfect likeness of God. Love is the greatest gift of the Spirit. All other gifts are meaningless without love. The fruits of the Spirit are a reflection of love. Those who produce the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) became one with the nature of Christ. The Holy Spirit helps the believers to become transformed, sanctified and enlightened. It is the Holy Spirit that redeems us from sin, reconciles us to God through Jesus Christ and makes us God-like. The Holy Spirit is constantly at work in the Church, in the world and in individuals.

In his epistle to the Ephesians, St. Ignatius of Antioch writes: 'The believers are the stone with which the Church that is the temple of God is built. These, stones are fastened together by the cord of the Holy Spirit. The Epistle of Barnabas states that the holy baptism transforms the creatures of God into the temples of the Holy Spirit.

In the 'Catachetical Lectures' St. Cyril writes: 'The Holy Spirit is the teacher, companion and the light of the Church as well as the one who sanctifies everything. The hosts of angels cannot claim equality with him. He appoints, reigns over and sanctifies the seven orders of angels. All gifts belongs to the triune God-head. The gifts of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not separate. The Father gives these gifts through the Son and the Holy Spirit'. (XVI: 23, 24). The core of the patristic teaching about the Holy Spirit is that it is the agent of Theosis. In baptism the Holy Spirit sanctifies us and bestows divine nature on us. He intercedes on our behalf, teaches us, enlightens us, causes us to be born a new and gives us everlasting life. The Holy Spirit sanctifies all the heavenly hosts. He will be with Christ on the day of Judgement. It is the Holy Spirit that gives us our knowledge of the future, of divine mysteries and of God's hidden purposes. Further more, everlasting peace' life in God and the experience of approximating ourselves to God as well as the blessing of becoming God are ensured by the Holy Spirit.



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Rev. Fr. K.L. Mathew Vaidyan is a talented orator, writer and a biblical scholar. He has good repute in the fields of Comfort Literature, Theological Training and social service activities. After his post-graduate studies in Serampore University and Russia, he rendered remarkable service as the Professor of Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam. At present, he is the Principal of St. Paul's Mission Training Centre, Mavelikara. Also, he is the Chief Editor of three church publications namely, Orthodox Youth, Powrasthya Tharam and Doothan. Earlier, he worked as the General Secretary of the Orthodox Christian Youth Movement of India, and St. Thomas Orthodox Clergy Association. He is an active member of the Orthodox Church Managing Committee, Planning Committee and Publication Committee. He served as the patron of the Ali Kerala Balajanasakhyam Mavelikara Union, vicar of a number of parishes in Kollam Diocese and Delhi Diocese. Being a resource person of religious conferences and a renowned convention speaker, he travels around the world preaching the word of God and proclaiming the Theology of Reconciliation. He is the author of seventeen books.

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